

“COME, FOLLOW ME”

by

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1st Edition-1952

PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BY MACALESTER PARK PUBLISHING COMPANY
1571 GRAND AVENUE, ST. PAUL 5, MINNESOTA

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my little nine-year-old granddaughter, Mary Louise Elliott, to whom I read the manuscript while she awaited the angels of Heaven to take her to Jesus.

"It gives me good dreams," was her last comment before her granddaddy departed on a journey from whence he was never to see her on earth again. She and I shared many precious day-dreams and one of them was that the reading of this book will bring you good dreams, too.

As John, who interpreted the inner soul of Jesus, recorded some events of his life in different order from the synoptic gospels, so in this narrative an occasional liberty has been taken with the sequence and locality of incidents.

As you comprehend and accept the beauty, simplicity and true revelation of Jesus as found in this book, you will inspirationally feel that you have written it yourself.

As you read it, you are the one taking this journey back to Jesus

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CHAPTER 1: TAKE ME TO JESUS

ONE DAY I was reading a Book so filled with great ideas that I *knew* the truths I was reading were not limited to the covers of the book. "Great truths like these," I thought, "know no boundaries of Time or Space."

Even as I was pondering this thought my eyes lit upon a statement so short and simple that I might easily have passed it by. Yet the impact of those three words upon me was tremendous:

"COME, FOLLOW ME."

As I read them a great longing came upon me to rise and actually follow Jesus. How I yearned to leave the trivial activities around me, the mechanics and gadgets of this modern age, and hurry at once to Jesus' side and follow him along the winding paths of Galilee.

"But of course I could not do that literally," I thought to myself.

"Why not literally?"

Who had spoken? Out of the ether the voice seemed to have come. Or were the books on the shelf speaking to me? I reached for a book on astronomy; then one on geology. I opened first one; then the other. It was as if the writers themselves were speaking the words into my waiting ears.

"There is no limit to Space," said the astronomer. "It goes on and on, east and west, north and south, overhead and down under, farther than the telescope can see."

"There is no limit to Time," said the geologist. "There is plenty of it in the past—no need to be miserly with it as we long since learned in computing the beginning of the glacial era—no end as far back as the mind can reach. And there is plenty of it in the future."

Suddenly over the radio right here in my room, I heard a tenor singing in New York City. I remained still, but space ventured forth and came to me. The voice traveled so quickly that it arrived the moment after it started. Space had contracted. Something, also, had happened to Time. It had changed, too. Time had become as fluid as Space. Then suddenly I thought—as Space moves, Time moves. Time and Space have been inseparable partners, but Time has been the elusive one of the pair. Too long we have said, "How far away is it?" and we should have said, "How long does it take to get there?"

As Space vanishes—but is not destroyed—beneath the vibrant wheels of a train and the vibrant waves of a radio, Time also vanishes but is not destroyed. As Space has revealed its secrets far away, so Time, if properly understood and properly controlled, is ready to give up its secrets of past and future. We have found Space and put shackles upon it. Time, its partner, stands at our palace door. Behold, I

shall arise and go forth and lead Time in. I shall put it to work in the interests of our present generation. As Space has given me journeys to distant parts and has brought beautiful messages from the ends of the earth, so shall Time now take me on journeys of joyful discoveries and bring messages from the distant past.

And then I said, "Take me to Jesus."

At once a strange vehicle of light and sound appeared before me. I stepped inside and began as wondrous a pilgrimage as mortal ever made.

For it was not Space that flitted past me as we rose in the air, but men and flowers and living things—and all, all were growing young, young; heavy voices receding into childish laughter and trees fading into seedlings striving for the light; all returning to their roots of love and joy and peace.

And when the light was very bright, and the joy was very full, I found myself standing by the side of a low, slanting hill. Down it was coming a young man with quiet, uplifted gaze, whose eyes were dark, but soft and friendly as hearth embers burning low. Such contentment fell upon me as I looked into his eyes that days might have passed and months rolled on before I ever noticed the rest of his face, were it not for the smile that seemed to bring the heavens down. Although he did not look at me I thrilled as I felt myself somehow included in that smile!

"Dear one, you have stepped outside of Time. No matter. Where you have stepped, there I have always been." Had he spoken? He had already passed on.

A herdsman came beside me. "Did you speak?" I asked.

He pointed to the figure that had passed. "He thought a thought," he said. "His thoughts are heard if you are hungry enough. He feeds us with his thoughts." He paused a moment, then added slowly, "I sometimes feel he does not consciously think them, but rather they are drawn out of him by another's need."

"And who are you?" I asked.

"I am a herdsman of Capernaum not long here from Keriothe with my family. That man once saved my niece from dying. He only took her hand—" he paused, bewildered. "She was already dead. He only took her hand—and she arose! I love that man. He saved the beloved daughter of my most beloved brother—and he only took her by the hand!"

He led me down the Capernaum way and invited me into his cottage.

"I see you are drawn to Jesus. You are a stranger here?" he said as we entered the doorway.

"My son, Judas," he added, "is working at the place of trade. When he comes home, he will tell

you more. Meanwhile, rest here for a while."

Shortly the door opened, and Judas came in. He was tall and dark with a handsome, though cold, mouth. When he took my hand he enfolded it in long bony fingers that I knew would have hurt had he pressed me with the warmth that I pressed him.

The father said, "Here is another who would follow our Jesus, son."

"He is worth following," said Judas. "There is no limit to what that man can do. He saved my favorite cousin, and all that he did was to take her by the hand. Just wait until he seizes power with his two hands!" His white teeth flashed in his swarthy face.

Just then a woman came in accompanied by a maiden, slender and frail in body but with large and mystical eyes. I loved her the moment I saw her. The woman obviously was the mother of Judas and like him she was angular, cold, and, it seemed, severe.

"This is my wife," said the herdsman simply. "And the little niece I was speaking about. Her parents are away for a week and she is staying with us while they are gone."

"Uncle Jairus," said Judas with a show of pride, "is Ruler of the Synagogue, and is off for their annual meeting in Jerusalem."

"Do you live in these parts, or are you a temporary sojourner here?" asked the mother.

"You are not a native of Capernaum, that I see," said Judas. "Do you come from Cana?"

"No."

"From Bethesda, from Nazareth?"

These names seemed familiar, yet so strange and far away.

"No," I replied, "I come from very much farther away than that, much much farther."

"I am sorry that we do not have room for you here in the night," said the mother, "but you are welcome to stay for our evening meal. Ruth will help me get it ready and you need not wait long. Have you traveled far today? Are you tired?"

"I have traveled very far," I replied, "but I am not tired."

I was aware of something piercing me from behind, and turned about uneasily to find Judas staring at me. A slight tremor passed through my body. What if he plied me with further questions; how could I answer in a way they could understand? What if he suspected me of something that I was not? In my ignorance of their customs, how could I protect myself?

With a strange, oriental politeness foreign to my occidental training, they dropped their questioning as suddenly as they had begun. The conversation took another turn. They talked of simple

things, of the weather, of the dust which they said was worse this year than last, of the caravans passing through the trade route north of the town in larger numbers than ever before.

"I can say this much for Roman occupation of the territory," said the father. "The Romans do make travel safer than it has ever been before. They help to produce conditions that could lead to prosperity."

"But," said Judas, "for every protection they bring, they make the conquered people pay double in taxes. Better a few bandits than so many publicans."

"What the bandits leave, the publicans take," said the mother dryly. Then setting a bowl of lentils on the table she added, "How I hate the very word—publican!"

"Yes," said the father, "I suppose they are the lowest dregs of this lowly land."

"I understand that they collect all that the traffic can bear," I remarked.

"What is that you say?" asked the father quickly. Then he smiled. "You must indeed come from a strange land. You use the quaintest expressions!"

Ruth brought pan and towel and we washed our hands.

"Come, please," said the mother, and we all reclined around the table. I found this a very comfortable position, although I did shrink from the way they put their fingers right into the food, even into the stew, taking out what they wanted. I saw now why they had brought the pan and towel, why washing the hands seemed so important before eating. I began to wonder how people could have lived in this age, so different in hygienics—and so totally devoid of sanitation.

As we ate, for the most part in silence—as though it were more a rite than a meal, I was haunted by the thought that the bodies reclining around that table were actually long lying in their graves! They were completely dematerialized by now, yes, possibly not even a skeleton left. Yet here they were partaking of food and evidently enjoying it. Besides, what exactly was this process of taking food? Did it not in reality consist of letting the life of God merely pass through like a flowing stream? Then deeper thoughts came tumbling in rapid succession. By what curious alchemy were the life-conveying vitamins, those mysterious elements of God, converted into flesh and blood, which in turn become a garment or habitation for a soul? And were not these souls here in my presence living somewhere, eternally somewhere? What should prevent them from donning garments of form at any time for purposes of identification, of recognition? I knew it could be so, and what were these friends doing now but simply that?

Then my mind shifted to another track. Some stars and their planets are a thousand light years

away from the earth. Imagine a person in the twentieth century with a telescope through which he could see a detailed close-up on a distant planet a thousand light years away. Suppose, still further, that there was a mirror on that planet that could reflect life scenes on our earth planet and that he could focus the telescope on the mirror. As it would take a thousand years before a scene on earth was registered in the mirror, and another thousand for the reflection of it to come back to us, it would mean that through the aid of the telescope and the mirror we would be seeing events as they were happening on earth two thousand years ago! That would mean that in America in 2000 A.D. we could be seeing things happening in the days of Jesus. This raised another question: Who would then be real—the twentieth century observers, or the contemporaries of Jesus who were being observed? I smiled as I thought and looked at my hosts around the table. "Should I pinch you or you pinch me to see which one is real?" But I refrained from speaking or pinching for I had a strange conviction that I was of the substance of unreality and not they.

I was brought back suddenly from my wonderings by the exclamation of the mother.

"Zebedee! That is the solution!"

"The solution to what?" asked the father.

"The solution as to where this stranger can stay tonight. Salome, his wife, told me yesterday that since their cousin left for the vineyards of Peraea they have an extra room and we are free to send them any guests that come to us who are in want of a place to sleep."

"And who is Zebedee?" I asked very curiously, for his name had that familiar and yet far-off sound that was beginning to arouse in me a weird sense of recognition.

"He is the father of two sons, John and James, who make this city famous for its fishing. And they have cousins, Simon and Andrew, who are, with their father, Jonas, bringing in bigger hauls than anyone in these parts."

"Oh, Zebedee!" I exclaimed. "He is the man I wanted to meet."

"Where did you hear of him?" asked Ruth, strangely alert.

I stared at her, helpless to try to answer.

"Don't be so curious," laughed her uncle, relieving the strain. Then turning to me he said, "Ruth is half in love with his son, James. She finds things in that family that none of the rest of us do. Anyone interested in any of them interests her mightily."

"What she sees in that net-mender," said Judas, speaking with a lip curled in disdain, "is a puzzle to me. His way of doing things is wilder than the east wind."

"When you wish to go," Ruth offered, paying no heed to her cousin, "let me show you the way."

"They live right in our neighborhood—no need for your help," rejoined Judas.

"Judas," reproved the father, "do not discourage the hospitality we always accord strangers." Then to me he added, "When you are through eating, I shall go with you also."

CHAPTER 2: I LOOK INTO THE FACE OF ZEBEDEE

AND SO IT WAS that I found myself in the home of Zebedee, the luckiest thing that could have happened. "Yes," I thought, to myself, "I am surely in the hands of God. If I leave all to Him, trust all to Him, I know that everything I came for on this journey will be revealed."

(And here may I ask my readers to relax themselves completely to my story and remain sensitive to the Spirit, for only those who read this in tune with the Spirit will be able to derive full value from what is to come. I, for one, gain much every time I think back over the experiences that follow. Whether I was snatched up in body or only in Spirit I care not; but this I know, that what came through is of the Spirit, and the Spirit blesses all it touches.)

We found Zebedee sitting outside his house mending nets. He had a wide, shaggy beard over a strong chin, and above the beard, looking into mine, were two dark, meditative eyes.

"Here is a man from distant parts," said my guide. "Could you find a place to let him sleep for a few nights?"

"I am sure we can," replied Zebedee, bending upon me that wonderful gaze. "Come right along."

Ruth, who had accompanied us, went off down the road toward the lake where the fishermen could be seen unloading their catch.

Zebedee took me into the house. His wife was putting away the supper things, her back toward us. As we entered she turned with a quick movement and this time, very clear, proud eyes appraised me.

"Salome, here is a new friend," said Zebedee, and he went about the task of piling nets in one corner of the room to make a place for me to sit.

His wife greeted me with a dignity and grace that seemed unusual in a fisherman's hut. "Honored I am to meet one who looks as though he might have come from another world. I observe that you are not one of us. Are you from across the seas?"

"From across the seas of Time," I smiled back at her. She stared at me uncomprehendingly and

then turned to the fireplace.

"I am used to riddles and conundrums," she said. "My husband talks in nothing else. If he employed his brains for practical things half as well as he does for allegories, we might be leaders in these parts instead of plain fisherfolk."

She lifted a heavy pot and then with a sigh added, "I hope John and James take the high places that are awaiting those who strive."

As she turned in profile I noticed her proud, keen features—receding chin and prominent high-bridged nose. Her sloping forehead was in direct contrast to the bulging forehead of her husband. I mention these details because they made a deep impression upon me as I sat there watching them, and I could not help comparing their features with those of the boys when they came in a few minutes later. James entered carrying a large basket of fish; John bore the nets.

James' eyes were keen and his features very much like his mother's—a receding forehead and chin sharpening the appearance of the nose and mouth. John had the bulging forehead and meditative eyes of the father. His chin was receding like his mother's.

They turned and saw me and smiled with a graciousness and hospitality that was both regal and simple in manner. James' bearing was erect and proud; John's was dreamy but very engaging. When I told John how eager I was to meet him, his cheeks showed a pair of deep fleeting dimples as his lips widened into a bright smile. There was a sweetness about this John, a dear quality that would make anyone love him. I watched as he turned and straightened out the nets and noticed how his hands worked with amazing dexterity and speed.

"I rather thought John would be impractical and inefficient," I said.

His mother turned and looked at me.

"I don't know what made you expect anything unless you have been talking with his father yonder. Well, John is certainly very impractical, but far from inefficient. The trouble is he doesn't like any work where he has to think."

"That surprises me!" I exclaimed, for I had especially considered John a thinker.

"Yes," she replied, "he is good at fishing, straightening out nets, doing anything where he can let his mind dream along about other things. If he can be a thousand miles away from his work, he is happy at it, not otherwise."

"On the other hand," added the father, "James, there, takes after his mother. They both think twice while anyone else in this house is thinking once."

"He thinks about the thing he is doing—not the thing he wants to be doing, like John," remarked his mother.

"And dad here," put in James with a quizzical smile, "just doesn't believe in thinking at all."

"Nope," responded the subject of our conversation, sitting on his nets in comfortable leisure. "Where does it get you? We don't think ourselves into a living. We merely pull in the fish and they bring a living to us. And what makes the fish? Certainly not thinking! They are spawned into living. No, I care not for anything that isn't spawned out of a need to be met and a desire to meet it, nor for any recompense that isn't begotten by a desire to serve and gratitude for the service. Anything that is merely *thought* into being fails to interest me. It has only half a reason for existing. To me it doesn't exist, or if it does seem to exist," and he gave a snap of his fingers, "it doesn't exist long."

"A little more thinking and talking against the grabby Arabs that buy the fish from you and we would get a better living, all the same," said his good wife, putting the dishes away and wiping her hands.

"Everything talked or thought into a value that it does not really possess," said her philosopher-husband, "comes back upon you like a bad herring. If the world took things easier, trusted its values to be born into life, and not thought into life, all would be happier."

"Do you know Jesus, the carpenter's son?" I finally ventured. I was eager to discover whether any of this philosophy came from him.

"Oh, so you are a Jesus follower!" exclaimed the mother. "You are not the only one who has come a long way to hear him. It is strange how a young teacher who has spoken his message only a few months has drawn people from afar."

"Does he agree with you, Zebedee, on this birth process?" I asked.

"I think he would," replied Zebedee. "But I never asked him about it."

"He might," said John. "He is always talking of the necessity of being born again."

"How long have you known him?" I asked. "Ever since his boyhood," replied Zebedee.

"John and I played with his younger brothers," put in James. "He was older than we, and was working in his father's shop, or wandering alone in the hills much of the time while we were growing up."

"His mother Mary has told me some things that I think are precious," Salome confided.

"Did she ever tell of the wise men from the East?"

"Yes, but that is a long story. Don't get us started on it now. If you do, Zebedee will wear you out with the symbolism he draws from it."

"It won't wear him out, mother," said Zebedee, laying down the net he was mending and seating

himself close beside me. "I am sure our guest will enjoy it."

John and James, their eyes twinkling, nodded to us all and slipped out.

CHAPTER 3: CONCERNING GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND MYRRH

MARY HAS often spoken of the magi that came at the birth of Jesus, and of the gifts they brought," began Zebedee "Some of our neighbors doubt the story, saying that she made it up; otherwise why should not Joseph be rich? But they make the common mistake of all people who insist upon looking merely at the outside of the platter.

"The gifts the magi brought could be regarded as tokens—the little casket of gold did provide for Joseph and Mary on a trip to Egypt, but its significance didn't end there. I see it as indicative of the gifts of faith which Jesus will always find sufficient unto his needs. The gift of frankincense was also a token, indicating his would be a life interwoven with prayer. Joseph and Mary treasured this sign that Jesus would always keep in touch with his Heavenly Father. The myrrh gave assurance that he could heal human bodies when those in need came to him with a faith equal to the faith of the wise man who proffered the gift."

"And is this true?" I asked. "Does he have these three gifts?"

"Perfectly," said Zebedee. "With him they are vital. In fact, he is the only one I ever knew who has this gift of frankincense as a LIVING thing. Most of us have no contact with God whatever, and those few who do, have it only during the little period when praying, fasting or sitting in the synagogue listening to the reading of the Law and the Prophets, or when participating in some ritual of the temple. But Jesus has it always—when working in the carpenter shop, or when visiting with friends. Whether walking or working he walks and works with God; when sleeping, he sleeps in his Father's arms. He does not need to fast or engage in ritual—those are merely doors taking one into the Father's house. Why need to go through doors when you are already inside? Or, as he put it to John and James one day, 'Why need to fast when the bridegroom is present?' "

"Doesn't he pray? I mean, pray in words, as we have to do?"

Zebedee hesitated. "He was brought up in the synagogue and knows all the laws and the reasons behind the laws. And he says he fulfills them. But I sometimes wonder just how he prays. When someone comes to be healed, he does not pray; he merely touches the sick man and says, 'Your sins are

forgiven,' or 'Your faith has made you whole.' But my sons say he goes up on the mountain long before dawn and there talks with God as if He were his Father. I suppose he does his praying when the others are sleeping. If so, the rest of the day he is a *living* prayer. When a time of crisis comes, he doesn't need to pray in words as we do—he is already *living* in his Father's presence.

"I see," I replied slowly. "That is very interesting to me—very, very interesting." Then I added, "And in regard to myrrh, which I believe is a substance used for healing or preserving human bodies, you spoke of that as a gift of healing. Does he have that in an especial sense?"

"Yes, almost beyond the belief of man! But more significant to me than his power to heal bodies is his power to heal minds and souls. I've seen him actually cast out demons."

"And gold," I continued. "Somehow I can't think of Jesus as one who has a gift of drawing gold to himself. Was that really one of the gifts of the magi?"

Zebedee leaned hard over a knot in the net. Finally he said, "No one seems aware of this gift of Jesus except myself, and people might question me if I ever mentioned it. As a matter of fact, I have noticed for some time that since he came to the state of awareness, Jesus has never suffered want. This could be due to his good workmanship in the carpenter's shop, or to the good workmanship of his brothers, or it may be due to the careful planning and buying of his mother. They are a generous family, giving freely wherever there is want, and there is much want these days, with the Roman tax-gatherers sucking our very lifeblood, and the priests demanding much in tithes and gifts.

"Mary is infinitely more generous than my wife, who holds fast to every farthing we make at the fish market, and we make much some weeks. Yet we are in want many times a year. Indeed, we have been helped very often by Joseph and his family. But I have noticed that every time Mary gives something away, a new contract comes to the carpenter shop. I begin to think that her generosity has something to do with those contracts.

"But let me tell you something. I believe that Jesus will break away from his carpentry altogether now that Joseph is gone. He may leave it to his brothers and start out to preach. And, mark my words, as soon as he does, just see how he will be taken care of. Jesus has the very widow's cruse of oil, as far as gold is concerned—but he has no money stored up, no treasure chest hidden in a field, no pearl of great price. Gold to him is a fluid thing that will always flow in to meet his need, or anyone's need who has faith enough; and he will always let it flow out to satisfy the needs of those who come to him. Indeed, were he to require a coin to pay a tax or buy a meal and there were none in his pouch, I verily

believe he could go forth and cast a line and draw in a fish and in the fish's mouth would be found the coin."

"Nonsense!" protested Salome, who had just entered the room. Then she added archly, "But I daresay he could sell the fish for a coin that would buy the thing he needed. Jesus of Nazareth does not need much for himself. This I will say, even though he is the dreamiest of all the dreamers, he uses most of the gold that comes to him to help others' needs—not his own."

"Did Jesus ever speak to any of you of a period of temptation he went through," I ventured, "where he spent forty days and forty nights being tempted of the devil?"

"He told our sons about it," replied the mother, "and they tell us very little that Jesus tells them in secret."

"They told us enough to satisfy our guest's interest," said Zebedee. "You see," he went on, "it is the custom of our young men who feel called to spiritual service to put themselves through a forty-day fast. Forty is symbolical of testing and discipline. Noah was forty days and nights riding out the storm before the new age began. Moses and his people wandered forty years in the wilderness before our mighty nation emerged. Forty is a symbol of preparation for great things, and Jesus is undoubtedly destined for great things. He is one of the few young men of spiritual vision who has undertaken such a test in my days. He is a true believer in the symbology of the Scriptures, Jesus is!"

"I sometimes get tired," Salome sighed, turning to me, "of Zebedee's everlasting tracing of symbolism in everything. And I think you are wrong, Zebedee, in not correcting our guest's impression that he was tempted forty days by the devil. You know it was not until he was weak and the period of fasting was almost over that the devil appeared. It was just the last three days that the three great temptations came to him."

"And did it ever occur to you, Salome," rejoined Zebedee, "that the temptations of Jesus were temptations to give up or use wrongfully, the three gifts of the Magi?"

"Oh, Zebedee," pouted his wife, as she put a kettle of water on the irons, "I never have time for thinking about such. You are always seeing new things no one else sees! You are almost as symbolical as Jesus!"

"There is destiny in every least event in life," said Zebedee, "if we can read it properly. And I have never known of a life in our time where destiny is so manifest as in that of Jesus. This may be

because he has such a remarkable way, no matter what happens, of accepting every event in it as a part of his destiny. He is the only one in Galilee that does. Keep your eyes on him. Much will happen to him and through him."

"But about these temptations," I persisted; "in what ways are these related to the gifts of the magi?"

"They were temptations to use these powers for base and lowly ends," replied Zebedee, turning back to the mending of his nets as though he were in for a long discussion. "Take first the gift of gold, Jesus' gift of drawing to himself the necessities of life in the time of need, of veritably turning stones into bread. Satan suggested that he put to practical use this gift to make him the richest one in Israel. Jesus replied, 'Man does not live by bread alone.'

"And then the devil told him to use his healing power of love, the gift of myrrh, to win fame and glory for himself—yes, to demonstrate that he could be protected from hurt even if he dropped himself from great heights. And to this temptation Jesus replied, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Last of all he was tempted to turn his gift of frankincense to selfish uses. Frankincense is another word for adoration. What you adore you draw to you. Satan said to him, 'Adore me, my power, my glory, all that I stand for, and you shall have all power and all glory!' To this replied Jesus promptly, 'Thou shalt adore God, and Him alone shalt thou adore.' "

"And so he kept his gifts?" I replied.

"Yes, and because they are flowing, loving gifts, he commands a reservoir of Good which shall never cease its flow. You can expect great and wonderful things to come from anyone who possesses and treasures these gifts. Indeed we all possess them if we really knew our powers, at least that is what Jesus says; and if we would trust his teachings fully, he would show us how to use them so that they would function in every area of our lives. He tells us we all can become heirs of God, just as he is."

Just then John came and invited me to take a walk with him down to the lake. James had gone out strolling with little Ruth. There was a lovely moon in the sky, and the lake opened beautifully before us.

CHAPTER 4: A GLIMPSE OF JESUS' CHILDHOOD

WE RETURNED from the stroll along the lake front. John had remained strangely silent during the walk and now seemed to want to stay outside with James and Ruth. I went in and sat down beside Zebedee who was still working at the nets. I had an insistent inner guidance that he had something more to tell me.

Zebedee looked at me steadily with an expression that was penetrating and yet gentle, critical and yet kind. I became self-conscious under the undeviating gaze. I felt exposed, naked to the inmost core. Suddenly he let go of me, much as an archer would release a tightly drawn bowstring. I wondered fancifully if my soul were flying through space—or time.

Then I realized that what Zebedee had just done to me, I had long been doing to myself. I had long been drawing, with a deep soul's sincere desire, on the bowstring of the wish to see Jesus, to walk with Jesus, to live, move and have my being with Jesus. And then one day—or was it one night?—I had completely let go that wish. I had let loose of the bowstring and relinquished string, bow, arrow—all—completely into the hands of the Father. Was it a hundred years ago or just last night that I had made this deep surrender, this utter release, this positive, absolute commitment of "all my ways unto the Lord?" Just last night, it seemed, and now in ways beyond finding out, in a manner beyond my power even to conceive, He was bringing them to pass! I was finding what I had sought! I stole a look at Zebedee. He was still busy with his nets, but in his gentle face there rested a deep content as one whose dreams were being fulfilled.

"So you are seeking Jesus," he mused, more as a man speaking to himself than to another. "He is a nephew of mine. I have felt from the beginning that he was different from all other men, and that sooner or later the world would come seeking him. And you are one of the first."

I stared at him. "No, oh no!" I cried. "There have been thousands—yes—millions . . ." and then I checked myself.

"I am not talking of time," said Zebedee, whose eyes were still fixed on the nets upon which his hands were busy. "Jesus never talks in time. He always talks in eternity. That is why I think all men will someday seek him out. He has said even as a boy, 'Before Abraham was I am.' " Zebedee lifted his eyes and fixed them upon me again. "I was not talking about time when I said 'first' just now. I meant that you are one of those who has put this desire first in your life. Is that so?"

"Yes," I said eagerly.

"Well, finding him with your eyes is but part of the finding. The chief way to find Jesus is to find him within. You can get close to him in this room, if you wish."

"How?"

"That is the way Jesus himself lives. He is here but he is everywhere. His soul touches all men everywhere, in the past and in the world to come, just as this air we breathe was always in the world and will be here a million years after you are gone. Moreover, this atmosphere touches everyone who is living now. It is breathed in at every breath by all who live."

"Could my soul have done the same with Jesus?"

"Yes."

"Then I need not have come?"

"Yes and no. You should have come, but sooner. To know all of one you should know him from birth on." He was no longer looking at me but at his nets. He was no longer talking to me at all—he was merely thinking out loud.

"I, too, try to live in eternity. Fishing is my avocation. Living in eternity is my business."

"Are there others on the lake like you?" I asked.

"Only my son John. James has a little of it. If Jesus can find three men who have that, he is lucky. But he says that he can find *twelve*. I doubt it."

"You said a moment ago that the way to know one is to know him from his birth on. Could one know Jesus that way?"

"Certainly. His father, Joseph, was my brother. Joseph told me of the birth of Jesus. Would you like to hear?"

"Oh, yes!"

"It was in a little stable, on a soft, clear night. The labor came slowly. Joseph was frightened. It was their first child. He knew of no physician to go to—not even a midwife. He dared not leave Mary. He knew he must do it alone. Then a great peace came to him. It came to him from Mary. She was the picture of tranquility, of serenity. She labored, yes, but as one labors with a great, vast idea—as Moses must have labored to bring forth the Ten Commandments, as David must have labored when he wrote the Twenty-third Psalm. It was such an awe-inspiring, creative labor that the awe of it took away all pain—all but once—" he paused.

"But once?" I asked. "When was that?"

"When the babe came into the world. It was all over in an instant—but it was the pain of death. 'Strange,' Mary has said, 'that birth should be so much like death.' Strange, yes, very strange—I myself have long pondered it. So did Joseph. As he sat beside Mary while she labored in a peace that overcame all pain, he said to her, 'This is not a birth. It is something else. This child that is on the way is not a child of mine but a child of God. I feel as though God Himself were about to enter this room.'

" 'I have *always* known it;' said Mary, 'only the Son of God could come this way.'

" 'But why in a manger?' asked Joseph. 'Why not in a temple?'

" 'Read your scripture,' replied Mary. She would say no more. The next instant the child came. And with him the momentary agony of death, and as he came, a quivering moan, almost like a death rattle sounded in the throat of Mary. 'O Mary, are you dying?' cried Joseph.

" 'Yes,' said Mary. 'I shall never be the same again.' And she never was."

And now I saw perspiration on the face of Zebedee. He had been strangely moved by his own words.

"I am tired," he said. "I will see you in the morning."

That night as I lay on my couch, a great longing came to me to have known Jesus as a boy. Oh, that I might receive one glimpse—just one—into his childhood! I do not know how long I had been sleeping when I heard a voice just above me speaking softly into my ear. And the voice said, "Listen, for out of the past shall come the answer. Listen, for every word ever uttered in secret shall be shouted forth from the housetop. Listen, and you shall hear."

Clear and sweet came the cadences of a youth's voice: "For I have seen that ministers in the world and priests in the temple are not able by much talking to bring peace to troubled souls. I have seen people obeying all the rules and the rules did not bring them out of the pit. All the scribes and the Pharisees putting their heads together do not seem able to save one man out of the net of misfortune into which he has fallen. Why is not the synagogue giving water out of the rock as in the days of Moses, and manna out of the air as in the time of Aaron? Can it be that God is not speaking as He used to speak?"

Then I knew that I was listening to the boy Jesus in the temple.

"Son," said a wise man in a quiet voice, "I, too, have asked that question. You are prudent beyond your years to ask it now."

"How like a little boy who yearns to hear fairy stories!" exclaimed one. "But listen, child, there

was a reason for such things then. Earth and heaven were closer together than in these hard, cold days."

"Boy," said another voice, heavy and loud as one who commands, "it is better to leave such questions until you grow older. Better give your time now to obeying the law, and someday you may be able to see the light."

"The light!" exclaimed the boy. "Lo, that is what God is, is He not?—the Light of the world! And do little children have to wait until they grow up before they see the light of the sun?"

"Aha," cried one, "he has you there, Benjamin. Answer that one."

But the heavy voice did not reply, so the lad went on:

"Neither should little children have to grow up to see the Light of God—but I do not see it in the synagogue."

"What would you have us do?" asked another. "You little one who would change all things to suit your own desires, would you give up the law that has already led Israel out of Egypt and will still lead us out from Rome?"

"I would have the synagogue preach the Light, live the Light, shine forth the Light, so that God would be known everywhere."

Just then I heard a woman's footsteps as of one running, and a voice almost out of breath exclaiming, "My son, my son, where have you been? We have searched for you three days."

"Do you not know," was the reply, "that I must be in my Father's house, about His business?"

That was all. When I woke, it was day. Light was flooding the room. Was it true that God was Light? Then God was flooding the room—yes, He was flooding the world with Light, were we but aware of it!

CHAPTER 5: A JOURNEY TO CANA

I HAD AWAKENED with a great yearning to *see* Jesus. The brief glimpse of him as he descended the hill that first day had begat in me a hunger that would never be satisfied until I lived, moved and had my being in his presence. I wanted to be *filled* with the blessed sweetness of his presence.

"What is the shortest way to Nazareth?" I asked Zebedee. His massive beard rose and fell as he

nodded approval, and his teeth parted in a smile.

"So it is in your blood, too? They always get it sooner or later. So you would see Jesus?"

"Exactly. And as soon as possible!"

"Well, the short road wouldn't be to Nazareth. He has been with his cousin, the Baptizer, down by the Jordan ever since you came. But now bad news has reached us. The Baptizer has been placed in prison. His followers have been dispersed. And Jesus must be returning. I doubt if he has reached Nazareth yet. He has probably tarried somewhere along the way."

Salome now appeared in the room. Her face was tense and she was going about her work even more rapidly that morning than usual.

"If our guest is thinking of going to Nazareth," she said, "we can guide him on the way. Halfway between here and Nazareth lies the little city of Cana. Our whole family is starting for the place early tomorrow for a wedding of a dear friend of ours, and we would be glad to have you with us."

"I would love to go!" I exclaimed.

"Come here, Salome, and join us," said Zebedee "Nothing to do now that breakfast is over."

"Nothing to do!" she mocked. "I have got to get everything put in order before we leave."

"That's a woman for you," sighed Zebedee.

"Yes," I thought, "I guess women are the same through all generations."

And so the next day I was on a long journey with the entire family of Zebedee. The soft dust eddied around our sandals and the Judean hills stood forth blooming and verdant under the morning sun.

Along the road we picked up a stranger going the same way. He was smooth-shaven, like James and John, a quiet simple man, tall and rangy, with a weather-beaten countenance devoid of all guile. His name, he said, was Nathanael. He was going to Cana to be with a beloved friend he hadn't seen for years—named Philip. It was a particular joy to me to have him with us, for in his curious candid way he asked questions of the others that kept the conversation channeled along the very lines in which I was most interested.

When we asked him from whence he came he answered, "I have been following John, the Baptizer, down by the Jordan."

"What is the heart of John's message?" Zebedee asked.

"Oh, this Baptizer!" said Nathanael. "He is proclaiming a new Israel. Descent from Abraham does not entitle one to free entrance into it. Position and power have no influence. Repentance alone, with

the change of life that accompanies true repentance, is the only way of entering it."

"I understand," said Zebedee, "that he calls the Pharisees and Sadducees a 'generation of vipers.' Isn't that pretty hard on our national leaders?"

"But he doesn't limit his epithets to the leaders only," replied Nathanael. "He applies them to the leaders and led alike, and to rich and poor. But he does point his finger at each one's deadliest sins. To the soldiers he says, 'Be content with your wages.' To the publicans he says, 'Don't exact more than you should.' To Herod he says (and here he amazed everyone by his audacity), 'You should never have married that adulteress, your brother Philip's wife.' "

"What kind of man is this John, anyway?" I asked.

"He is like a pine of Lebanon," replied Nathanael, "not like a shade tree in our cities. His roots go down so deep, that not even the most powerful storm could shake him. He follows no advice unless he is positively sure it comes from God. He is crude in some ways, but you can't be in his presence five minutes without realizing that you are witnessing the beginning of some tremendous movement. One gets the impression that he is in a stream of destiny of some kind that nothing in heaven or earth can stop."

And so I learned much about John, the Baptizer, and about Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, and about the tax collectors. It seemed that sin of one kind or another abounded everywhere and John the Baptizer, almost single-handed, was trying to bring the entire world to repentance.

I found the Israelitish wedding interesting and entertaining; but very long. At the feast which began when the wedding was over, the wine was red and people were soon drinking too much. The host became disturbed and whispered to his servants, but they had no power over the guests and the house was filled with noise and uproar.

Nearby I suddenly saw the face of a beautiful, saint-like woman. She was talking with a young bearded man whose eyes were so heavenly that I instantly recognized the same Jesus that had passed me on the hill.

"They have no wine," I overheard the woman say. "Could you do as you once did in our home—bless the water and make it inspire them more than wine?"

"Woman," said Jesus, "my time has not yet come. You are trying to hurry me into something that I have not yet the commission to do. I must wait for guidance from above."

As she walked past she smiled at me and said, "My son does not flaunt the power that he has with his Heavenly Father. When he sees the need, and the embarrassment of his host, he will act. He always

responds to another's need; but never, never to display his power."

Then turning to the servants she said, "Do whatever he tells you."

After awhile I noticed that Jesus was missing from the boisterous crowd. Could he have left in disgust and gone to the hills? I went out through the back doorway, past the kitchens and the servants' quarters, the most natural way to get to the mountains from there, and stopped abruptly in the hall adjoining the kitchen. For there stood Jesus looking at six open, empty stone water jars. "This is the way the Father speaks to me," he said quietly, as though he had always known me. "First the need—then the voicing of the need, then appear these six empty water jugs, like six open mouths all speaking at once. Will you ask the servants to come here, please?"

When the servants arrived he said, "Fill the jars with water." It took many trips to the well before they were all filled. As this was going on, Jesus stood before the jars in prayer. When all were filled to the brim he said, "This water is blessed and therefore it ceases to be water. It is the channel of the Holy Spirit. Those who have lost their self-control through drinking alcoholic spirits shall find Godcontrol through drinking the Holy Spirit. Now draw some out to take to the governor of the feast."

Filled with curiosity I followed. When the servants reached the governor, who was explaining to the people that the wine was all gone, he lifted the goblet to taste it and then exclaimed, "Everybody serves the good wine first, and the poorer wine after people have drunk so freely that they can't tell the difference!" And then reprovngly to the servants, "You have kept the good wine until now!"

"More wine is coming!" the ribald groups shouted to each other, and they settled down in circles to be served. Presently each one was drinking, and gradually the home grew quiet and peaceful, and happy looks came upon all the faces around the room.

"For the first time I am drinking wine I like and am growing less intoxicated with every drink," said one. And I standing by and watching the servants pass in and out among the throng, not omitting a single one from the serving, felt as one present at a sacrament.

CHAPTER 6: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE CARPENTER

THE MORNING after the wedding, Zebedee said to me "Salome and I are returning to Capernaum today, but my sons are going on to Nazareth. They are going to throw their lot in with Jesus. If you would know him better why don't you go on with them?"

"That will be perfect!" I exclaimed.

"But, remember, my friend," he said kindly, "whenever you come back to Capernaum our house is yours."

Mary on an ass and Jesus walking beside her had left that morning before sunrise, one of the servants at the inn told me. It was midmorning before James and John finally started down the road toward Nazareth. By that time Jesus and his mother were half a day's journey ahead of us. I was almost feverish in my desire to overtake them. But we did not come within sight of them all day. After a while I found myself staring at the footprints on the path before us as we walked.

"I am walking in Jesus' footsteps," I thought. "How marvelous it would be to walk with him hand in hand!"

Reaching Nazareth at nightfall we three were welcomed in the home of some friends of James and John, and after a slight repast we all eagerly sought our beds. That night as I retired to an upper room in this strange house, my heart and mind were full of many things. In this new land of Eternity I felt such a richness of life flowing in and out and all about me. It was as though the love of all my dear ones whom I had left behind was girding me about. It was as though the joy of all my friends, yet unborn, added to the air about me a vibrancy and exhilaration. There seemed to be such a wholesomeness in this age in Palestine, as though much of the grime and dust along the road of the centuries had never accumulated; much of the customary odors of the streets and marketplaces were absent; much of the jostling and quarreling were muted as by the silencer of a violin. So real and precious, however, was this world which I had entered, that for a while I was afraid to go to sleep lest I should never waken in it again.

The next morning as early as possible after breakfast was over I went forth seeking the house where Jesus lived. Open wide to the sun, it seemed hardly a house; it was more like a protected, walled-in piece of ground. Near by was the workshop. Shavings and clean bits of newly-sawed boards lay by the open door. I paused at the threshold. A figure was moving in quiet, rhythmic motion planing the top of a table. Because he remained so silent and because I was so eager to hear his voice again I asked a foolish question, the first that came to my lips.

"Could you make something that would keep for two thousand years?"

"You mean a chair, a table, or something you could carry away with your hands?" He was smiling at me as one would smile at a child.

I nodded. "How I would treasure a thing made by you," I said.

"Beloved one," he said softly, "that which is not seen is so much more precious than that which is

seen. Learn to treasure that which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and which thieves cannot break through and steal."

His eyes were now upon his work. With an easy gesture he brushed some sawdust from the bench.

"Everything will someday turn to dust—everything but one."

"And what is that?" I asked.

"Love."

Without pausing in his work he went on, his voice growing very soft at times and at other times bursting forth with almost explosive eloquence:

"Love is a little word. It is looked down upon by kings and potentates and trampled upon by conquering armies. But as fast as it is beaten down it will rise again. Yes, Love is a little word but it holds the planets in their places."

He paused a moment in his work and looked at me. "Love is something you cannot take hold of with your hands. It is not something that you can see with your eyes. But oh, my little brother, how much more powerful are those things we cannot see; how much more permanent are those things we cannot carry with our hands! So do not ask for furniture for the outer eye to see and the hand to feel; ask rather for that inner furniture for your heart and soul."

I sat on the threshold and fanned myself, for it was swelteringly hot. He brought a cup of water and gave it to me. I took it with both hands and as my fingers touched his, my brimming heart flowed out to him in a spiritual merging I had been longing for. Oh, how tender was the touch of his hand! I looked up into those beautiful eyes and found them looking gently into mine.

"Dear friend," he said, "you are not far from the Kingdom. I see that you are one who loves."

"I love you!" I declared.

He went back to his work. The even, rhythmic sweep of his arm as he planed the table was his only response. I sat there for a long time before he spoke again. How wonderful was that stillness! It seemed that I could sit there for all eternity. I felt a peace akin to what one feels by the open lakes or when seated on high mountains. Speech would have been a sacrilege.

Finally, after what might have been an hour, he said gently, "You cannot truly love me unless you love all those that I love."

"Oh, I do!" I cried.

"Do you love the shepherd that stood beside you when I passed you on the hill?"

I started. "Did you see me then?" I exclaimed. Then he had *seen* me! "I thought your eyes were on the sky."

"My thoughts were on you."

"Yes, I do love that shepherd who stood beside me," I cried.

"Do you love the maiden that I took by the hand?"

"Ruth? Oh, indeed I do. And what love you awakened in all when you restored her!"

"Do you love Judas?"

I hesitated. Certainly nothing like love had passed between us two. "I—I think I can learn to love him."

"Oh, you must love him," he said quietly, and the even rhythm of his work came to an end. "He needs it most of all. And his mother—some unkind ones call her the coldest, hardest woman in Capernaum. She too, needs your love. And can you love the publican and the harlot?"

I was expecting this last, and my answer was long prepared. It had been ready ever since as a child I had stood at my mother's knees and heard the story of Jesus from her lips, long before I knew the definition of those awful words.

"Oh, indeed I can," I exclaimed, "and find it not so hard, because you have done it before me."

"As I was planing this table just now I was thinking of all the tables that are spread out in the hearts of men. Little do I care what a man spreads out upon this wooden table which is made by the carpenter Jesus, but much, oh much do I care for the use put to the table of the heart made by the Anointed One, by the very body and soul of Christ."

"But I thought that you and Christ were one!" I exclaimed.

Then he leaned over me gently and laid his tender hand upon my head. It was tender but not soft. Vibrant and elastic it was, but not soft. It was the strong hand of a workingman.

"Because you are ready and able to receive it: I am the Christ!"

CHAPTER 7: A VOICE IN A SYNAGOGUE

THE SABBATH had come. I accompanied James and John to the synagogue. The little building was packed. People were standing all around the sides. There was hardly room for us to squeeze in and we stood just inside the door.

The ruler of the synagogue rose and faced the throng. A long beard hung dark against his white mantle. Above the beard loomed a hair of deep, unhappy eyes. He raised his hand for silence.

When his prayer was finished he handed the roll to Jesus and sat down. And now Jesus was standing up and facing us. In his hand he held a long scroll of scriptures. He unrolled several feet of the papyrus and then began to read:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; for He has consecrated me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to proclaim release for captives and recovery of sight for the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour."

When he had finished reading he rolled up the scroll, handed it to the attendant and sat down.

"Isn't he going to speak?" I whispered to James beside me.

"Oh, yes. They always sit down to speak in the synagogue."

"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing," began Jesus. Then after a short pause he continued, "The Father is closer to you than any of you understands. The Kingdom of heaven is not something far away, only to find after death, but it abides in you right here and now, if you only knew how to turn and find it. You will never find it by looking for it in outward things, pointing to some new riches, saying, 'Lo, here' or to some new honor and saying, 'Lo, there.' The Kingdom of heaven is within you—in the peace and patience, the love and joy, the humility and faith, the temperance, gentleness and goodness that fill your inner soul. The Kingdom can come to you today and cast out demons and sickness; yes, it can even bring you bread for your needs and clothes to cover your nakedness, but only as it first brings you to the Father to control and direct your very life."

Again he relapsed into silence. I like this custom of silent places in the synagogue.

Someone beside me said, "Weren't those beautiful and gracious words! Isn't he a wonderful speaker!"

"Where did he get such ability?" asked another. "Isn't he Joseph's son?"

"Yes, and Joseph was of all men the poorest of speakers."

"Now perhaps he will cure somebody."

"Do some of your mighty works," called a man from the rear.

"Do what you did in Capernaum," said another. "Heal blind Jonah," demanded another.

"Yes, yes!" others shouted. "Heal someone!"

"I want to tell you something," said Jesus quietly. "I can sense in an interior way when the right condition for healing is in our midst, and dear friends, it is not here today. There are doubters here, and some have come to scoff. I feel it as clearly as the boat feels the tug of the anchor which the mariner has neglected to pull up. The winds of heaven cannot move the boat over the beautiful surface of the sea so long as the anchor holds fast to the mud at the bottom.

"But, my beloved friends and neighbors, I blame no one. I utter a universal law of which you are merely the unwilling victims. No true prophet was ever without honor except in his own country and amid his own neighbors and his own kin. This law held just as fast in the days of the prophets of old as it does now. In Israel there were many widows during the days of Elijah, when the sky was closed for three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land; yet Elijah was not sent to any of these, but only to a foreigner—a widow woman at Sarepta in Sidon. And in Israel there were many lepers in the time of the prophet Elisha, yet none of these was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."

As people filed out of the synagogue a group of excited citizens tarried at the side of the road.

"Did you ever hear anything so egotistical! He claims to have power to heal and then doesn't give us a chance to prove that he can't. If he had just attempted to heal lame Jonah we could have humbled his proud spirit. Jonah agreed to pretend he believed—merely to show him up."

"But he says that faith is needed and without it all will fail."

"Shut your mouth! By what right does this carpenter pretend to greater power than the rest of us?"

"And what piled mountains upon mountains was the complaisant way he dismissed all our attempts to make him even try to heal anyone!"

"And his effrontery to compare himself with the greatest of prophets, Elijah and Elisha! Even they couldn't do any more than he! Of all things!"

"That is what I call a sacrilege."

"The next thing he will be making himself equal to Moses."

"Or putting himself before Abraham."

"After that he will be saying he is the Messiah! Blasphemy!"

"It will bring disgrace upon Nazareth."

"Already people say, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' If we let him go around the land

speaking in this way he will bring ignominy upon us."

"There is one way we can save our town from disgrace and ourselves from continued insults."

"And what is that?"

"Let us take this infamous man to the brow of yonder hill."

There was an angry chorus. "That is good. We Jews cannot shed blood, but instead of casting stones upon him let him fall on the stones."

"But how get him to go with us?" asked one.

"He can be handled as easily as a lamb. Remember he told us once, 'If a man forces you to go with him one mile, go with him twain.' Let us invite him to go with us for a walk."

When I saw them taking him up the hill I followed close after. At the edge of the precipice Jesus looked down, and then he turned around and faced the crowd.

"The heavy weight of your unbelief that I felt upon my shoulders in the synagogue I carried with me up this hill. But I carried something much more powerful on my other shoulder. Murder was stalking up the hill on my left hand but Love was on my right. Love is so much more powerful than murder that I smiled as I came. You do not know how weak you are.

"Dear, misguided ones, how my heart went out to lame Jonah, sitting there in the synagogue, to blind Jacob and to dying Rachel whom you all love. Why could you not have lifted the anchor of unbelief for one minute at least and let the healing winds of God blow through that synagogue? I entered the temple to save life—you ascended this hill to destroy life."

Incensed voices in the back of the crowd broke in shouting, "Yes, and we'll do it now!" Blind rage flared and all became confusion. My blood froze as I feared for his life; and then what I witnessed melted it and caused it to sing as it flowed freely again. It was as if Love opened a pathway through the mob and I saw him pass through unharmed and untouched. Moments later I caught a glimpse of him strolling down the hill. John and James and I hurried after him. We felt so heavy that not one of the three of us could speak. In Jesus' eyes was a look I never saw before, a light of purpose and resolution.

As we drew near the city, he turned and spoke to James and John.

"Satan has been attacking from all sides. The Baptizer will never preach again. His disciples are dispersed. The time has come for me to gather some disciples around me. Yesterday I asked your cousins, Andrew and Simon Barjona, to leave their nets and I would make them fishers of men. I would say the same to you. Will you follow me?"

"We will follow you," said John. "We will follow you," said James.

"We will follow you. We will follow you. We will follow you." A thousand times my voice was saying that. I was saying it for countless thousands of people of my day. Even as we walked into Nazareth I could hear the footsteps of a multitude behind us!

CHAPTER 8: A SERMON ON A MOUNTAIN

CROWDS WERE gathering on the outskirts of Capernaum now that Jesus had come back. As I mingled with them I found they did not call him Jesus of Nazareth, but they used the term given only to teachers of high degree—Master. In the group were many sick. Some lay on pallets by the side of the road. Many were blind or partly blind, a disease much more common than I had realized. There were no lepers in the group; they were evidently not allowed to travel that far from the outskirts of the cities where they were segregated.

Presently Jesus came down the road, accompanied by the sons of Zebedee and of Jonas—many fisherfolk following. Seeing the sick, Jesus turned aside from the path and went from one to the other, touching them, especially the eyes of those who were blind. Had I ever doubted the healing power of Jesus before, I never can doubt it now. But it came to me almost as a shock to see him giving so much attention to the healing ministry. What if he were only a healer—a professional healer of bodies—could the world have given its worship to him as it does now?

But suddenly he was finished. All who had faith were healed, and it seemed that most of those who came from a distance had that faith. Some of his old neighbors from Nazareth and a few of the new neighbors of Capernaum looked on with skeptical eyes, but not the family of Iscariot. All—Judas especially—seemed to revel in this power exercised by the Master of Nazareth.

"We are going to the mountain," said Peter to the crowd, and all immediately joined the procession.

The crowd by now was ranging itself all about him along the sloping hillside. There was a slight dip in the terrain at this point, making a natural amphitheater. But Jesus was standing somewhat above us, so that we had to lift our eyes to see him.

Finally, with the twelve close about him—the faces of Judas, John and James being especially conspicuous in the group—he seated himself upon a slight mound and looked quietly at the crowd before him. Then, when he was set, he opened his lips and spoke, saying,

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn..."

As the voice continued, at times rising to powerful emphasis, I noted the startling iteration and reiteration of things that the people about me must find astounding and amazing. All the lowly, humble virtues were being extolled; all the powerful ones were being brought low.

Opposite me sat a Pharisee staring incredulously at Jesus. But now his face was changing. Exasperation showed in the lines about his mouth, and then actual beads of perspiration appeared upon his frowning forehead. I suddenly realized what I was hearing:

"One jot or one tittle of the law shall in no wise pass away until all these things shall be fulfilled. But unless your righteousness shall *exceed* the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in *no wise* enter into the Kingdom of heaven."

The excited stir about me made me realize that I had seated myself in the center of a group of Pharisees. I was encompassed by angry whispers and glowering faces.

"And when ye pray, be not as the scribes, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen 'of men."

I never realized how personal and severe this address was, and how it singled out certain groups for special warning.

A soldier sitting nearby now looked startled. "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you . . ."

"Those who hear my words and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended and the floods came and winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these words of mine and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall thereof."

Jesus had finished the parable, but in the silence that followed no one moved. It was as if they all hoped he might speak again.

"He has given us enough to last a lifetime!" exclaimed a Pharisee sitting right beside me. "If—if we only put it into practice."

"You speak aright, Nicodemus," said Zebedee, who was sitting on my other side. "That sermon

will not die. It will live and propagate itself."

"Such power breathed through him as he spoke," I said with a sigh.

"Did you see the light in his eyes?"

"I am not referring to the power in his voice or the light in his eyes," replied Zebedee. "I refer to the words in his mouth. They are living words, I tell you. Cut into them and they would bleed."

Now the people were rising from the ground and were starting down the hill, talking earnestly and gesticulating as they went.

"He speaks differently from the Scribes and the Pharisees," I heard one of them exclaiming. "He doesn't speak as one who had gathered these ideas from books, but as one who had already experienced them in his life."

Nicodemus, Zebedee and I stayed where we were, still pondering the words we had just heard. I noticed that the little circle of twelve men Jesus had gathered around him remained intact. One of them, tall and raw-boned, had risen and was asking Jesus questions.

"I, too, should like to ask him some questions," said Nicodemus, "but if my fellow Pharisees saw me it would not go well with me, for he said some very hard things about us. I shall have to seek him out under cover of darkness sometime."

Zebedee smiled. "So you are immediately putting into practice Jesus' words, 'Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing!' " and he laughed gently as Nicodemus, silent and meditative, started on down the hill.

"Let us press forward," I whispered to Zebedee. "I want to hear what that athletic-looking fellow is saying." "That is Simon, a true son of Gideon. He is a member of the Zealot party that is plotting the overthrow of the Roman Empire." And he led me to them.

As we sat down behind James and John we heard clearly the words of the Zealot:

"Master, did you mean our Roman oppressors when you said, 'Forgive your enemies?' "

"Why shouldn't we? They despise us as an inferior race just as our people despise others as of an inferior race."

"Whom do we despise?" interrupted the Zealot.

"The Samaritans, the Ethiopians—but why limit enemies to race or nation?
The real enemies are within."

"What do you mean?"

"I can answer that," replied Jesus, "by a parable. There is a Roman captain in Jerusalem who

places guards every night at the gates of the city. He considers every Jew he meets a son of Belial, not capable of a single thought beyond his greedy gains. In contrast to him, there is another Roman captain in charge of the sentries that guard Capernaum. He believes that every Jew represents a blessed heritage born and reared in the ethical teachings of Moses and the prophets. He has built with his own money yonder synagogue as his contribution to a faith that he admires. Which of these two Roman captains is our enemy, would you say?"

"I should say," and Simon's strong jaws emphasized every word, "that the one who despised us and saw only the lower self of each is our real enemy."

"You say aright," responded Jesus. "Our only enemies—and they can be among our own household as well as among invading hosts—are those who see in us only the lower self and ascribe all our actions and motives to that lower self. As long as they do that sincerely and honestly, however, they can be forgiven, for they know not what they do. But when they have clear proof that what we say and do is prompted not by a self-centered motive, but is inspired by the Holy Spirit speaking and acting through us—and they still insist that what we do is done by the power of Beelzebub, then every slander they utter must be paid for to the last farthing. Verily, verily I say unto you, men may blaspheme the son of man and they may still be forgiven, and forgiven up to seventy times seven, but when they blaspheme the Holy Spirit, then they are committing the one and only unforgivable sin. Every curse they send out shall fall back upon *them*. Verily, verily I say unto you, they shall be required to pay to the last farthing."

"But is that consistent with the character of a loving Father as you have described Him to us?" It was John's voice speaking.

"After the last farthing is paid," said Jesus, "the healing may come. The Father never hates. He may punish but always to redeem. But take care that *you* don't do the punishing; don't you assume the office of God. Whenever man lets his emotions of hate and anger take over, they destroy not the one they are directed against but the one who entertains them. Anger is merely the punishment that one inflicts upon himself because of the wrong doing of another. Heed the words of the prophet, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' And remember, when a nation roots out the enemies within its own soul it will cease to have enemies without."

CHAPTER 9: CLEOPAS APPEARS

"TOMORROW we are going up to Jerusalem," said Nathanael to me one night. And so I was going to see Jerusalem at last! As I thought about it, the wonder of it and glory of it so invaded my mind that for hours I could not sleep. Ultimately I fell into such deep slumber that all the sounds of crowing cocks and barking dogs could not have roused me.

When finally I did awake I could find no trace of the disciples anywhere. John was gone—Nathanael was gone—all the Twelve were gone—Jesus was gone. A great vacancy came upon me, a sense of incompleteness, an unquenchable yearning to be close to Jesus. And it was while I was in this state that I met Cleopas.

Cleopas was a quiet, slender man, with light beard, blue eyes and a gentle, dreamy way that reminded me of Zebedee. When I told him that, he exclaimed, "I married the youngest sister of Salome, Zebedee's wife." At once I felt drawn to him as though he were one of my own family.

"I came to see Jesus," he said. "Ever since I saw him baptized at the River Jordan I have yearned to follow him. And now that I come to Capernaum, I find that he is gone!"

"He and the Twelve are on their way to Jerusalem," I replied. "I, too, would follow him."

"Then come with me," he said. "I know the road to Jerusalem. Let us go together."

And there began one of the most satisfying friendships of all my sojourn in Palestine. He was a sweet soul, was Cleopas, and he loved to talk of the ancient prophecies about the coming Messiah.

To my amazement he did not consider Jesus to be the Messiah. "Jesus is the Forerunner," he stated. Before I had time to remonstrate he went on, "Isaiah explains all about it. Elijah will come first to clear the way, the Messiah himself will not come as a human being, but out of the sky. He will judge the world and then heaven will come to earth. Jesus of Nazareth is that Forerunner spoken of by the prophets."

"No!" I protested. "Jesus himself is the Messiah. John was the Forerunner."

Turning to me as a patient teacher would instruct a little child he replied, "John was not the Forerunner. Some tried to put that title upon him but he repudiated it when the priest and Levites came to question him. He confessed that he was not the Christ, neither was he Elijah nor the prophet. He said he was just a voice crying in the wilderness. 'I am not worthy,' he insisted. 'Here is the one who deserves that honor. I am not worthy to tie the latches of his sandals.' And that is the way he introduced Jesus to us by the River Jordan. No, my friend, any man of human flesh born of man and

woman who dared to claim the Messiahship would be guilty of blasphemy and would be put to death at once by our religious leaders."

I dropped the argument for I saw that his love for Jesus and his unqualified devotion would reveal to him sooner or later Jesus' deep claims to Messiahship.

Toward nightfall we began inquiring of people coming down the road if they had met thirteen men travelling up toward Jerusalem. Several of them had. "I can never forget them," said one. "The leader seemed to have a radiance about him."

"We are on the right trail," nodded Cleopas.

It was at the bend of the dusty road, where the bare fields stretched off to the north, and the hills ahead of us looked like sloping backs of swine, that we caught up with those we were seeking. They were resting by the roadside. Jesus was talking to them of the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven. He was telling them how God is everywhere, and the Kingdom of heaven itself is pushing up all around us, in every blade of grass and in every star in the sky.

"The most beautiful thing in the world is the sky," said Philip.

"The most beautiful things are the hills," amended Peter.

"The most beautiful thing is the lake," offered Andrew.

"The most beautiful things are the birds that fly through the sky and dip down toward the lake," insisted John.

"THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING IS GOD," said Jesus. And then all became still.

"But whoever saw God?" Thomas asked after a pause.

"HE IS SPEAKING THROUGH EVERY WIND THAT BLOWS," Jesus replied. "HE IS SHOWING HIS GARMENT IN EVERY CLOUD, AND HIS GLORY IN ALL THE SKIES, AND IN THE FACE OF ALL MANKIND. WHENEVER YOU ARE POOR IN SPIRIT AND LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR SOUL GOD WILL SHOW THROUGH YOU AND THOSE WHO SEE YOU WILL SEE GOD. It is not the stars and the lake and the birds that are beautiful. It is God shining through these that is beautiful. He who looks only at the outside of form will not see God, for God is within. He who looks at the outside of men will not see God, for God is within their hearts. But if you see God in all things and in all men, God will come forth from all. If you go to meet God, He will come to meet you. You will make others sons of God when you have the eyes of a son of God. Therefore make your eye single—to see only God. If it is double and sees mammon, one eye pulls the other eye out of line; then you see nothing clearly. If the mammon eye crowds out the God eye, you will be

exchanging light for darkness and then great will be darkness."

"This is a complete turning about for most of us," said Philip. "How can we make the start of seeing God in all things?"

"You can start best not with nature but with human nature, and the human nature closest to you is the nature within yourself. Become quiet and listen for the still small Voice within you. That is the Father speaking. He is not in the earthquake, the wind or the fire, but in the sound of gentle stillness within your own soul. Cast out all hate of men, all doubt of God, and listen to the Voice within. God will speak to you. When you look within and hear only God and look forth and see only God, then will you truly become a son of God. But arise, We must go forth to Jerusalem, for there are many who are hungry in heart and soul, and we must not tarry here."

So they all arose and went on their journey. And because no one said us nay, Cleopas and I took up our staffs and followed along.

And one walking near the rear (I think it was Philip) turned to another and said in a low voice, "This Jesus, son of Joseph, sees only God in men, therefore I see only God in Him. He is truly a son of God!"

CHAPTER 10: INSIDE JERUSALEM

LATE THE NEXT evening we went up to the great City of David. Dividing into pairs, as their custom was, the disciples found lodgings in private homes. Cleopas arranged for me to stay in a fruit vendor's but near the sheep gate.

Early the next morning I heard many footsteps, and hurrying to the door I saw throngs of men and women going toward the gate. Although I could not see whom they were following, I knew at once that it was the gentle Jesus. I knew it was he because of the way they followed. For they followed not as crowds follow a caravan where the thought is barter and trade; not as they follow a Roman company when a centurion comes to town, but they followed with a loving and harmonious tread, with lighted eyes and a wistful eagerness that I saw only when he was near. With great joy I joined them.

They followed him through the gate, and then outside the city the crowd halted. Jesus was talking.

"Come unto me all you who find that life has become nothing but toil and tears and you who

have become restless under the weight of your burdens." His voice was compassionate as a brooding dove, yet clear and triumphant as a nightingale. "I will show you a way of peace and joy. Listen to me as if you were listening to God, and all that weighs you down will be lifted from you and in your souls you shall have rest. Believe that the Father speaks through me and believe that I speak of the Father. All that the Father knows is known to us as we need it if we but put all our trust in Him. If you receive me, not as a mere righteous man but as a prophet, I shall unfold God's truth to you as He wants it unfolded. You do not see the Father, and you will not see Him, unless He is unfolded to you in ways that you can understand. But as you can see me and understand me I can give you the peace you yearn for. Take your eyes off that which binds you, burdens you, saddens you, for it will but absorb you and bind you the more. Focus your eyes instead on God and the will of God. Whatever you have lost you have lost through bondage to sin or greed or lust. Sometimes you may feel that all is lost. Fear not, little ones. Lose yourselves in the will of God and all will be found." He reached down and picked up an olive leaf.

"There was never a leaf that came to bud, there was never a flower that came to blossom and fell to the ground without the Father's knowing it. Only as the flower obeys the Father's will shall it be immortal. He who would cling to the old, the past life, which is fading and going, and tries to save that life, is forever losing it.

"As you go with the Father's will and not against it, and move even as the sun rises in the morning to bring day, you will be forever rising to eternal day. Darkness will never engulf you. For wherever you go, you will be living, moving and having your being in the Father where there will be nothing but day. Then you will be experiencing the light of the will of God who is the ALL LIGHT. But if you think only of mammon and never of God, then the light that is in you will become darkness, and great will be the darkness. But fear not, little children, for it is the Father's good will to give you the Kingdom. Therefore, seek to know Him and all these lesser things will be added unto you. Love Him, little children, with all your mind, all your heart, all your strength and all your soul, and if you love Him enough, He and you will become one. Inasmuch as you give unto the Father, He will give unto you, and with the love that you love Him He will love you. Love Him, then, with wholeness, and He will love you with such wholeness that He shall make you whole and will give you the power to make others whole. Love Him with perfection and He will love you with such perfection that He shall make you perfect, and through your forgiveness you will help to make others perfect. Love Him with freedom from the world's limitations and He will free you from the world's limitations and give you the power to set others free.

For there is nothing that God gives that is not to be shared with others, and indeed, there is nothing that God gives that can be retained unless it is so shared. When that time comes, you need only ask, believing, for this mountain to be cast into the sea, and behold it will be moved. For verily, verily I say unto you, that whatsoever you in faith ask of the Father, the same shall be done, and what you ask in heaven will indeed be done on earth."

CHAPTER 11: A WOMAN OF SYCHAR

THREE DAYS we remained in Jerusalem. On the afternoon of the third Cleopas left for his own city in Peraea. He begged me to go with him and meet his wife and family but this I declined as I wanted to be with Jesus when he departed for Capernaum the following afternoon.

"At least come with me part way," he concluded. "There is a lovely little inn on the Damascus road where we can spend the night, and you can return here in the forenoon before Jesus leaves for Galilee."

The lure of the Damascus road settled it. So, late in the afternoon we started on our way. It was growing dark when we reached the inn, but the torches and glowing lamps, gave it a cheery atmosphere. The innkeeper himself, an old friend of Cleopas, spread almost as much light as did the torches.

"Cleopas, my friend!" he exclaimed. "How long I have wanted to see you. Come dine as my special guest. I have much to tell you, and I think your comrade would enjoy the hearing."

It seemed that most that he had to tell was of the depredations of brigands that had waylaid travelers on this lonely road. The only incident that I recall vividly was the following:

"One dark night when the wind was blowing a tempest," he said, "there came a loud knocking upon the door of the inn. When I opened it, a Samaritan stumbled in carrying a terribly beaten up Jew on his shoulder. The poor fellow was pretty far gone, but after we had worked over him a bit he came to. 'What happened?' I asked. All the helpless victim could say was 'Thieves,' and he went unconscious again. Surely he would have died had not that Samaritan stayed with him all night. While he massaged him and applied oil to his wounds and hot packs to his bruised places, he kept repeating until, bless my heart, it became so imprinted on my memory that I shall never forget it: 'The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save; He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing.'

"In the morning when the wounded man had regained consciousness and was beginning to

mend, the Samaritan opened his purse and paid me for the night's lodging and then added, 'Take care of him, and whatever you spend more, when I come again I will repay you.' "

The next morning Cleopas went on his way and I returned to Jerusalem. It was about noon when I arrived and I hurried at once to the house where Nathanael and John were staying.

"I am sorry," said the old housekeeper. "But they all left early this morning for Galilee."

I knew they were leaving that day but Nathanael had assured me it would be late in the afternoon. A great emptiness came upon me. My disappointment was so keen that it showed on my face.

"Don't worry," said the old lady, "They will come back some time."

"But I want them now. Can you tell me which way they went?"

"There is only one road, unless—," she hesitated, "unless they take the road that goes through Samaria. It is shorter. If they should go that way and you took the other, you would never catch up with them."

I thanked her and hurried on. As I started down the winding road, the same one upon which, with the Twelve, I had so happily come to Jerusalem, I felt as a lost little child must feel. All the compassion of my heart went out to all the lost ones everywhere. Was not the world filled with lost souls—little ones separated from the Great One—from their Protector—from their Saviour?

Fortunately the road that led to Galilee was downhill. I took advantage of this and walked with great speed. Loneliness still hung over me like a pall. More and more it clung and beset me as I knew it always would from now on whenever I was apart from Jesus. Was I growing to depend upon him too much? When I returned to the twentieth century would I be able to live without him? I smiled at the foolishness of such questioning. Of course I would carry him always with me then. For then he would have

risen to the Father and come down again in the form of the Holy Spirit and I would know his abiding presence. But here in Palestine, in this hour and place, I felt a terrible need to be close to the person of Jesus.

Deep in my heart there was a little resentment that Nathanael or John had not left word of their change in plans. It must have shown in my face, for every man I met darkened and scowled back at me. It came to me that they, too, were lost souls and more to be pitied than I, for they were even traveling in the wrong direction! This realization brought a great repentance to me. "Forgive me, Father!" I whispered, "for I truly did not know what I was doing." My heart lightened, my face brightened, and the road ahead became easier. People who passed smiled at me.

Finally when I came toward one whose smile was especially radiant I stopped him with the query, "Did you see thirteen men going toward Galilee whose leader carried a light in his face?"

"I certainly did!" he exclaimed, and his own countenance glowed as he spoke. "But I was up early this morning hours and hours ago. I was helping my father in the wheat field."

"Then there is no chance of overtaking them before they reach Galilee, I suppose."

"Oh, they weren't going through Galilee. At the bend down yonder they turned off the main thoroughfare to the road that leads through Samaria."

"To Samaria!" I thought. "Now I am sure I will lose them, for I don't know the road to Samaria."

"Are you sure they took the Samaritan road?"

"I stood and stared after them," he asserted. "I was so surprised they would dare take that road, for it leads by way of enemies of our nation. Jews and Samaritans have nothing to do with each other."

"Can you direct me? Are you sure I won't miss it?"

"You can't miss it. It is the first one leading off to the left, down there where the road turns, a rough, rocky, God-forsaken road that leads straight to the God-forsaken city of Sychar."

"Oh thank you," I exclaimed and was on my way with redoubled speed.

And there near Sychar I found Jesus. In a large clearing just outside the city he was completing a vivid parable of the Kingdom, but no one seemed to be giving him much attention. As he finished, one on the edge of the crowd remarked scornfully, "The woman said he told her all her past life; all that she ever did. We expected some thrills, but all we got was this trite stuff about loving one another."

"Bah! Time wasted," was his companion's comment.

"Young men," it was an old man speaking, "you are both wrong. The soundest wisdom rings trite to the shallow mind, and time wasted in the presence of a prophet is time saved in the sight of God."

The crowd dispersed, and I found myself beside the disciples.

"One at least caught the message," said John, and his eyes were following the old man limping away with his cane.

"But he is the only one," said Thomas. "Yes, I'll wager he is the only one."

Jesus moved away from the clearing. We followed. Matthew, walking by my side, said, "I'm afraid Thomas is right. Here Jesus can do no great work because of their unbelief. The people are seeking only outer miracles—they are seeking only some magic trick for creating crops through sorcery and other unseen powers. They care not for righteousness nor for love, and they are easily offended by us disciples because we are all Jews."

I soon saw that the disciples were not helping Jesus here. They returned the anger directed at them and were frankly irked at many things they saw the Samaritans do. It was then that I realized that Jesus could only work from within out as does the vine whose sap flows into the branches that naturally belong to it.

Matthew was again speaking. "I think Jesus will leave early tomorrow. I have often heard him say, 'From now on I shall come only unto the lost sheep of the tribe of Israel.' "

"It is not because he cannot let his heart go out to strangers," spoke up John, who was walking on the other side. "It is because the strangers will not let their hearts go out to him. Growth can come only through organic processes from vine to branch and from branch to leaf. It cannot leap from one vine to another, unless the roots be of the same parentage and united under the soil."

"Yes," said Matthew, "It was only as Andrew called Peter, and Peter called his wife, and his wife called the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, that Jesus' party grew, and never have I seen any group grow more like the vines and trees and shrubs of the field—from a seed into an ever-increasing plant of life."

But when the disciples with Jesus were making their camp in a field outside the city before leaving the area of Sychar, and its cold, forbidding group of halfbreed people, despised by and despising the Jews, there came by night the woman who first met Jesus at the well. She did not see me, lying near where he was sitting, for he had not yet pulled his robe over him to sleep. She went right to him, sat down at his feet, and put her hand in his.

"Blessed One," she said, "it came to me while I was listening to you this afternoon that you were speaking about me. It came to me then that you have been speaking about me all the time since you came to Sychar. Your parable of the woman and her leaven, of the woman who lost her coin and sought for it, of the importunate widow who persuaded the judge to avenge her—that woman was me, just me, and no other. When it burst upon me that you were directing all your words to me, I felt you were reproaching me and I was angry. I felt my face grow red and I thought everyone in the crowd knew that it was me you were talking about—until Deborah afterwards told me it was she you were talking about, and after a while Hannah, a neighbor, came to me and said someone must have told you her secret life. Then I knew you were a prophet and all my heart went out to you. I can see now why you spoke as you did and I love you for it. You want so badly to save us that you spent this day trying to reach us."

Tears were in her eyes. "I came to tell you not to tarry—at least not for me. I am not worth it. I am cold and dead. My heart is sold out to the fires of wickedness. All day I feared my people might rise and hurt you, and I would not have you hurt. I couldn't bear to see the hurt look come into your eyes when

you knew I was failing you."

"Woman," he said, "henceforth you shall never fail me."

"Blessed One," she said, in tones of adoration as she bent and kissed his hand, "I am not worthy to speak with you, much less to kiss your hand. But please, please stay one day longer. I know you can do something for us that has never been done before. Hannah and Deborah and I will be out there in the crowd praying for the heavens to open and for all to know that you are a prophet sent from God." And without another word she vanished into the night. Thomas Didymus and John Barzebedee, who were lying beside me, both raised themselves on their elbows, deeply moved by what they had heard.

"Do you still doubt," John whispered, "that he is the Messiah?"

"All I know," Thomas replied, "is that he is a true son of God!"

CHAPTER 12: DISCOVERING THE GOOD SAMARITAN

THE NEXT MORNING a delegation from the city of Sychar visited Jesus. Their leader was a man of great learning. "Your parables yesterday made a deep impression upon some of us. We have come to plead with you to spend one more day with us. We can promise you a smaller but more devoted group of listeners if you stay. We liked your parable of the four fields of grain. You found some hard ground and some rugged tares in the crowd yesterday, but we think we can find you some good ground for the planting today."

Andrew asked, "What other parables did you like?"

"Oh, the one about Jacob's well," chimed in several.

"Yes," said their leader. "You see, it is very deep. It takes a long time for a bucket to go down and be drawn up. That is the way with our worship. We have so many feasts and ceremonies, so much doctrine and creed, and God seems so very far away. You told us that God is a loving Father, quick in mercy, eager to help, and ever ready to forgive."

And now Jesus was speaking. "Our prophet Isaiah said, 'When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make of the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water.' "

The Samaritan leader caught him up eagerly. "Yesterday you said that everyone that drank of the water you would give him shall never thirst. You told us that if we would stop digging in the ruins of paganism and would sink a shaft straight to the God of Love who abides eternally within us we would have a well of water springing up to eternal life. Tell us more about this water of life."

"It is nothing but Love," said Jesus, "Love of God and Love of men. But it must not stop halfway. You must love God with all your mind and heart and soul and strength. And you must love your neighbor even as you love yourself. Is it so hard for you Samaritans to understand this?"

"Yes, because we bury our religion under so many forms that our God of Love is lost. Over seven hundred years ago the Israelites were evacuated from here and bands from Assyria—our ancestors—came in. We believed in many gods. Five hundred years ago we adopted as the basis of our religion the five books of Moses and thought at last we had found our true God. Some of us have even read your prophets.

"But you were right in the other parable you told us yesterday. You said we were like a woman who had had five husbands and the man we were living with now was not our husband. As long as our religion is clogged up with pagan ceremonies and our hearts are filled with hate for the Jews we are actually living in spiritual adultery."

"Come," said Jesus, "take me into the city and bring me only those who, like you, truly hunger and thirst after righteousness, and I will give them the water of life they seek. For again our prophets said, 'Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters . . . Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and your soul shall live . . . Seek ye the Lord while he may be found . . . For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways . . . My word that goeth forth out of my mouth shall not return unto me void but it shall accomplish . . . and shall prosper.' Follow this admonition of the prophets and you will find joy, peace and the kingdom of heaven."

As we were going into the city, their spokesman leading the way with Jesus, I noticed that our little procession had fallen into a unique pattern, each Jew walking with a Samaritan. I thought to myself how wonderful it would be if all the world might find the artesian well of God's Love and Harmony. Then opposing groups could walk side by side toward the perfect solution of all their problems.

My thoughts were suddenly interrupted by the Samaritan next to me.

"Our spokesman," he said, "is the living example of everything Jesus teaches. Whenever he meets anyone in need—even a Jewish rabbi or a Roman soldier—he binds up his wounds or pays his debts and

forgives his mistakes."

"If you have a man like that in your midst," I assured him, "just one man who really lives this religion of Love, then I know the message of Jesus today will bring a rich harvest to all."

Indeed this turned out to be amazingly true. I never saw a more intent and eager group of listeners than the little band that heard him that day. The woman of the well was there with Hannah and Deborah and perhaps a hundred other souls—men and women. Jesus closed his teaching with these words: "You have been confused even as the Jews have been confused. It is not *where* you worship (neither Jerusalem, nor in your sacred mountain) but how you worship. Every heart can be a shrine. Your worship must be in Spirit and in Truth. The Jews are more right in that they have tried to keep the Truth unadulterated. You must find the Truth too. And that Truth is that God is a God of Love, giver of every good and perfect gift, in whom there is no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning."

When he had ended speaking, the leader of the little band of Samaritans arose and said, "Friends, we have never heard anyone speak as this one spoke. Perhaps he is the one that can redeem the world." Then raising his hand as though pronouncing a benediction he said in a clear, melodious voice, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save; He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing. Amen."

And as I looked at the leader embracing Jesus, all the love in my heart flowed out and flooded over him. At last the parable of the good Samaritan had taken on new meaning. And I could almost hear Jesus profess, "I have not seen such faith, no not in Israel."

CHAPTER 13: "FORBID THEM NOT"

AND NOW WE were back in Capernaum. While Jesus was meeting privately the many who came to him in need, I strolled outside the city to a wide playground much used by children. This day James had gone fishing with his father, but John chose to come with me. After watching the children play awhile, John offered to help a group who were forming boats out of wet clay.

He was still busy with this when I looked up and saw Jesus walking down the road with two mantled disciples. A thin column of women and children followed. I joined the procession, and coming up close to his side instinctively laid my hand on his fingertips. Without turning his head or changing his

stride his hand opened and took mine in. Shortly he mounted a little hill, and there seated himself. The others gathered in silence and settled down about him, all seemingly as eager as I merely to sit a season in his presence. Soon there arrived a few of his disciples who had followed at a more leisurely pace, and finally a number of women came from the playground with their children, pressing through the throng until they were quite close to Jesus. They put the little children before him and cried, "Bless these children, O Lord."

Immediately Judas and Matthew arose, followed by the Zealot, and began to push the children away while they warned the mothers in stern voices.

Jesus, reaching over, caught up a little one that had avoided the pushing hands of the disciples.

"Stop, my friends," said he. "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven."

I sat quietly beside him as one by one he blessed them—a veritable stream of children. My heart was filled with the glory and the gratitude of that marvelous hour.

When he had finished, he said quietly to those seated near him, "These little children live as they actually live in the Kingdom of heaven, genuine, spontaneous, unselfconscious and free. Only as you turn and become as little children are you worthy of entering into the Kingdom."

That night I retired to the upper room in a large house where the disciples were staying. John came in and sat down on the pallet beside me.

"You are a strange man," he said. "I noticed the way Jesus took you by the hand today. Tell me about yourself."

"I come from a land far away both in Space and Time. I do not know whether you can bear it now. I do not know whether you could understand me if I told you about it."

"Speak, brother," he replied. "In vision I have often seen a new heaven and a new earth; and your speaking is like the voice of the Spirit that I have heard sounding within me. So speak, brother."

"I have come from a land two thousand years away—from a nation as yet unborn, where much that our Master speaks of will come to pass. The sick will be looked after; men will be free to choose their rulers; the hungry will be fed; no one will be allowed to go in want; and temples will exist in every town, built to the glory of this humble man whom you call Master."

I paused, for John's eye were searching mine with such rapt intensity that I could not go on.

"Do you mean to tell me," he said, "that churches will arise in lands far away, where people will

preach the gospel, heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons?"

"Where they will preach the Gospel, yes. But the faith will not often be equal to those other things."

"Will it be a time of hypocrisy, like this one?" he asked.

"Not as bad as this one. The ministers will be dedicated to the Master's service, but that which Jesus preaches most, they will most neglect. Much attention will be paid to the outside of the platter—great buildings, large church memberships—and too little time will be given to the weightier matters of the Gospel—Love and Prayer."

"Woe to an age that neglects those!" said John.

"Do you think I would have the right," I asked, "to go to Jesus and ask him for special advice for my age?"

"I will myself take you to him," said John, "I am sure he would reach that entire age as represented in you and lay his blessing upon it."

"That is what I want!" I exclaimed. "It is not his words or advice I would seek but his blessing. If he grants me that all else will be granted."

"When the time is ripe, I will tell you," he said.

I was surprised that John did not question me further. I was pleased that idle curiosity had not moved him to demand every last detail of the world that lay ahead. But it was like John to bide his time and to hurry no one, knowing that all things would come forth in their season. I wondered what he was thinking when he left the room for he seemed more absorbed in the heaven which Jesus had mentioned that afternoon than the world I had talked about—the world so far away.

I lay back and slept until dawn.

CHAPTER 14: A MOUNTAIN TOP

JOHN WAS shaking my arm vigorously. Oh, how hard it was to get my eyes open! Never had I seemed so heavy with sleep!

"Now is the time," he whispered, taking care not to waken others.

"Now is the time?" I whispered back. "What time?" It was as though the weight of centuries were

holding me down.

"I could waken two thousand people easier than I can waken you," gasped John. "What is the matter? Are you drugged?"

"Yes," I replied, "drugged with the sophistication and materialism of an entire age. When you shake me you are shaking the inertia of two billion human souls. No wonder I am hard to waken."

"Get up at once. The Master is awaiting you—on the mountain. Now is the time for you to speak to him. Now is the time to ask for that blessing."

Five seconds later my hands were moving like fans on a July day, lacing my sandals and throwing my mantle about my shoulders. Oh, with what speed one can dress for a blessing like this! In a moment we were outside leaving the other disciples asleep within.

"Where is he?" I panted. "Follow me."

We walked in silence through the town, around the bend of the road leading to the west, and on up the hill that overlooked the fields of Galilee. And there at the highest point, seated on a stone and facing east, was Jesus. When I turned to thank my guide, John was gone.

Without a word I dropped at the Master's feet and let my eyes, like his, seek the dawn along the eastern horizon.

We sat in silence for a long, long time. Then as the gold of the sun's rim threw slanting gleams across the countryside, I heard his voice speaking behind and above me.

"You have come from a time far off. It is a time when much that I have prophesied will be coming true. Otherwise you would not be able to be here. A ribbon of eternity connects this age with yours, just as that ribbon of sunlight ties all these fields and meadows together as one. As the sun bridges Space, so the Son of Man bridges Time. There is no Time to one who is born again—everything to him is Eternal—and in Eternity all is one.

"Before Abraham was, I *am*. After all your woes and wars, I shall still *be*." He paused. Then, as the sun began to flood the valley, he continued, "And now, my friend, what blessing would you ask for your age?"

"O Master Jesus, I would bring to you in my hands, in my full heart, all the people of my Time, yes the Time itself, and kneeling, lay them at your feet to be blessed."

"And what special wish do you make when seeking this blessing?"

"My special wish is for the entire age to be reborn, for everyone living then to be born again.

For what is life, if it be merely to eat and drink and reproduce one's kind, if our hearts are filled with hate and pride and greed?"

"You ask wisely, my son," he answered, and by now the voice was so clear I *knew this could not be a dream*. It was *real*, and I was truly in the presence of the Christ Himself.

"You ask wisely because *one cannot live* unborn in an age where people talk across continents and fly across oceans—where Time and Space no longer control, where only Eternity exists. A man in that world must be reborn into Infinity. He cannot live safely beyond Time and Space unless he has found the secrets of Eternity. In such an age the man who limits himself kills himself. Many men in your time will die beneath the wheels of the chariots of war or by the arrows of hate because your leaders have not been reborn. Unless your people can find the doorways of Love and Prayer, and throw them wide open—as wide as you open the doors to invention and discovery, and through repentance and surrender die unto the little self and be reborn to the Great Self, the doors of death will yawn wide for entire nations. Unless you be born again in the Love Way you shall die and find rebirth in the Suffering Way."

"And how can the evil days be shortened?" I cried. "Only through turning to the Father in love and devotion, and to the neighbor at your gates with forgiveness, tolerance and good will. When pride and discrimination have vanished, when greed after gold has disappeared, when slavery to the cravings of the flesh is surmounted—then will you see the Kingdom coming to earth as it is in heaven."

"And will that come in my day?"

"What is that to thee? Follow thou me."

I was hushed. I had no more to say. I knelt with head bowed—not now facing the sun that was high in the eastern heavens, but facing Jesus, the Christ. Then I heard the voice say gently, "When I am on the cross I shall speak good tidings of your day."

CHAPTER 15: ON THE MOUNTAIN AGAIN

HAVING HAD that blessed period on the mountain, the yearning in my heart was so great to be alone with Jesus again that the following morning I arose while the rest were sleeping and retraced the same pathway I had gone before. There on the mountain, seated on the same stone, I found him.

Slipping into position at his feet, I whispered, "O Master, it is such glory to be with you. But I must not interrupt your meditations."

"There are no interruptions in heaven," Jesus replied. "I came out here to abide wholly in the Father, and when one abides in the Father it matters not whether he speaks or remains silent. For Silence speaks as plainly as Words. Words, like Silences, can flow outward from the beginning of Time or inward for all Eternity."

"Will you give me the Word of Life, O Master?"

"Love is the Word of Life, for Love always radiates outward from Self, creating Life, through service, and returns inward to God, creating Life through adoration."

"Can Love bless others even if we do nothing?"

"Love blesses, no matter what one does or does not do. If one truly loves, he will find himself thinking, speaking, and doing in a creative, spontaneous way for the one he loves. For Love always leads. Therefore, to love in truth is enough. Right activity will always follow."

"Jesus," I asked, "will you reveal what you do in your silent periods on the mountain?"

"Why do I go up onto the mountain to pray? I am drawn up here. I do not come myself. I do not weary myself in the coming. Every step brings me rest. Even though I might be weary the night before I always find rest in the coming and a deep, infinite rest in the abiding after I get here."

"It is following the nights when I am most tired and heavy laden that I come and it is usually long before dawn. When I am very heavy with the sins of the world, or with the suffering of mankind, the Father takes me by the hand and leads me up into the light. The walking takes away the tiredness, and the climbing removes the weariness, and the being alone on the mountains dispels the anguish. People call it a paradox that to climb steep hills cures tiredness, and to walk out into the darkness takes one into the light."

"O beloved Son of God"—was I speaking or was I thinking?—"Is it concerns about this particular one or that particular one that fills you with sorrow and draws you up into the mountain?" He turned his eyes upon me.

"It is just a filling up of the cup of my heart," he replied, "and I do not always ask for whom the 'filling' comes, or to whom the healing goes. Whenever I do ask I find the answer—but it matters so

very little in the Father's house who has the need, for who has not a need at some time or other? It is enough to know that someone in the Father's family is suffering, and the Father's Son must go forth and bring him peace.

"The heavy weight that falls upon my heart is usually from countless hundreds of woes, little and big, that trickle like the streams of water into a common pool, and when the cup of my heart is full, I find myself drawn to the mountain to pour it out before the Father."

"But Master," I cried. "There is such a radiance about you; there is such a contagious joy and permeating peace that I don't like to think of you—our strength and hope—bowed down with heaviness."

"Let not your heart be troubled, little one." Again the magnificent eyes were turned upon me. "The anguish is always overmatched by the ecstasy that comes to meet it when one reaches out to the Father in humility, sincerity, and love. Oh the bliss that rewards one when in place of the darkness the Light flows in. Verily, verily, I say unto you: Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is truly the kingdom of heaven; blessed are they that mourn, for on the mountain they shall be comforted.

"It is only at night that I am filled with the woes of mankind in this most overwhelming way—for it is only when the light of the sun is darkened that the waters of suffering flow downward and fill the pools. Always when the sun is shining the water is being drawn upward toward the light, making beautiful the clouds. It is only at night, in the absence of the light of the Father, that the Son finds the cup is put in his hands. And there is only one place where the juice of the cup loses its bitterness and that is on the mountain, or in the desert, where there is nothing about save God. Then when I drink it, God drinks it with me, and the more I take of the troubles of others into my soul, the more they are taken into God's soul; the more I take them into my heart the more they are taken into the Father's heart. And everything that is taken into the Father's heart becomes that moment perfect and whole.

"So I rejoice and am exceeding glad whenever I find myself drawn to the mountain before a journey and when my cup is unusually full, and when my heart is unusually laden, for it is always after the heaviest trips to the mountain that there follow the lightest trips through the hearts of men. Verily, verily I say unto you, that the time will come and now is, when that which is whispered in the inner chamber or on the mountain top alone with God will be proclaimed from the housetop; and when he who cleanses the inside of the cup will find that he has cleansed the outside also, and he who

alone in communion with the Father cleanses his own heart of woe cleanses his entire world as well.

"Therefore I say unto you, when you pray, go into your closet and shut the door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is secret will reward you openly. And when you go up onto the mountain alone to pray, all the powers of mammon will tremble. For the prayer of one man upon the mountain will lift a multitude of men in the valleys.

"My beloved Son," those wonderful, compassionate eyes were upon me again, "never in history will the woes of mankind be greater than in the days that are to be yours. Never in history will the need be so great for a million surrendered and dedicated people to climb the mountains of prayer. Blessed shall be that people who hear these words of mine and do them."

CHAPTER 16: FISHING FOR MEN

SIMON AND ANDREW grew restive from the everlasting mingling with people. "We are fishermen," they said, "and the drawing in of fish is like balm to our souls. The men we used to go out with are scorning us and calling us lazy louts and fools. We are going fishing tonight after the Master is through and show them that we are still the best fishermen on the lake." There was resentment in their voices.

Early the next morning the crowds of people again began to gather by the lake hoping to hear Jesus go on with his parables as he had done the day before. When Jesus reached the lake no boat was docked in which he might sit to speak. Presently crawling out of the fog came the sturdy craft of Simon and Andrew.

I never saw Simon's face filled with such gloom. He and Andrew leaned back on their oars.

"How was the fishing?" called Jesus cheerily.

Dead silence followed. Then Simon broke out almost fiercely.

"We caught nothing. Not a thing! And we boasted to the Benadad brothers about what we were going to take. Our pride is crushed."

"We're tired, wet and hungry, too," added Andrew. Just then another boat came out of the fog.

"Who is that?" asked Jesus.

"John and James," replied Andrew. "They, too, went out expecting to bring back to our band

the honor of having the best team of fishermen on the lake."

"Did they catch anything?"

"Not a thing. Their luck was as bad as ours."

"Call them to draw up close until I tell you something. Did you hear what I said to the Pharisees the other day, that it is not what enters into a man from without that defiles him, but what issues forth from within him—his hate and pride—that defiles him and makes him ill?"

"Yes, we heard you," said Simon.

"Well, it is this same inner greed and hate and pride that can defile your efforts and make your business ill just as naturally as it makes your body ill. Did you not go out fishing last night with envy and resentment and pride in your hearts?"

"We only wanted to show these fine neighbors of ours that we were better fishermen than they. We thought it would be easy."

"Well, have you gotten over your pride and resentment and jealousy?"

"No, it has grown," said the honest Simon.

"But we can," interposed Andrew humbly.

"We didn't think it had any relation to our fishing luck!" said James from his boat.

"Now that you do understand, go out and let down your nets."

"But we have been fishing all night without results!" objected Simon.

"Do as I say," commanded Jesus. "Let down your nets."

I shall never forget that haul. Simon's boat actually would have gone down under the weight had he not leaped into the water up to his breast and come wading to shore, leaving to his brother Andrew the job of rowing back the boat.

"O Master Jesus," he cried as he came splashing in and fell on his knees, "I am a sinful man! I didn't realize how my human pride and resentment could curse us. Deliver me henceforth from such evil thoughts, I pray!"

"If you have learned this lesson, Simon, you are ready for the next. Remember I told you that if you followed me, I would teach you how to become fishers of men?"

"Yes."

"The law of the one is like the law of the other," continued Jesus. "You cannot catch fish with pride or with anger or with greed in your heart. And neither can you catch men. Turn those fish over

to your helpers on shore and as soon as your boat is ready let me get in and push off again. I will teach you how to fish for souls."

The boat of James and John was ready first, so leaving their own to be unloaded, Simon and Andrew scrambled in with them. They steadied the boat while Jesus entered and seated himself in the bow. From where I stood on the dock I could hear him say,

"I shall now describe to you those new nets that we have been talking about, the nets that will bring souls into the Kingdom. The meshes running one way are Love; the meshes running the other way are Truth. Where these two meet and intertwine you shall always be able to catch your men. Where there is only one set of strings and they run only one way, men may come to you, but they shall not remain."

"And what is the bait that can draw them?" asked Simon with a smile.

"The bait will be stories of life that you shall call parables. These they will swallow and later digest, and those who tarry over them longest will be caught up and saved in the net. For as the fisherman devours the fish which he catches, so that the fish and he become one in body, after similar fashion the heavenly Father will take into His heart those who are caught in the nets of Love and Truth, and in an infinitely higher way He and they shall become one in soul."

Wistfully I watched them push out from the pier, the four fishermen and Jesus. How I wished that I could have been one of them.

Having arrived at the right distance from the shore, and the crowds having seated themselves in tiers along the sloping bank, Simon dropped anchor and Jesus began to speak:

"A sower went out to sow, and as he sowed, some seeds fell on the road and the birds came and ate them up. Some fell on stony soil where they had not much earth and shot up at once because they had no depth of soil; but when the sun rose they got scorched and withered away because they had no root. Some fell among thorns and the thorns sprang up and choked them. And others fell on good soil and bore a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirtyfold. He that has ears to hear, let him hear."

He paused and then said, "As we sit in silence under the sky, let your thoughts swim around this parable for awhile even as the fish weave their way through the seaweed beneath this boat. See if you can draw some message from it that applies to you." He paused again and then added, "Not to

your neighbor, but to *you*!"

Presently the crowd about me broke into a subdued hubbub of conversation.

"There are some people who catch this inner message very quickly and lose it very quickly," ventured a farmer sitting beside me.

"They are the shallow," said an old man on the other side.

"Some gather it slowly but it sticks because their soil is good," said another. "But as for me I am so full of briars and thistles that it would have no room to grow if I did catch it."

I listened, fascinated, to the conversation this brief parable had stimulated. Each one was trying his best to interpret the allegory. And many, obedient to Jesus' injunction, were applying it to their own lives. Finally Jesus spoke again, and the throng on the shore became silent as they listened with absorbed attention. Parable after parable fell from his lips until every nook and cranny of the human soul had been reached before he was through.

When he ceased and the boat came in to shore, four enthusiastic fishermen leaped to land.

"We have learned more this day," said the thoughtful Andrew, "than in all the other days of our lives put together. Hereafter I shall be a fisher of men."

CHAPTER 17: THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

AT DINNER TIME Thomas put a profound question to the Master.

"You told us that a man is defiled not by the materials taken into his mouth, but rather by the thoughts and emotions within him which find expression in his words and actions. Well, news has just reached us that some of our fellow townsmen have been slain by Pilate because of breaking restrictions he set in Judea against the offering of sacrifices to Jehovah for the deliverance of the nation. Thousands participated but Pilate, clever and careful as he is, did not shed the blood of the many, as some of us feared. Rather he chose a score of them and slew them right in the midst of their sacrifices. Are we to believe," concluded Thomas, "that these, because of some past sins, must have drawn the suffering especially to themselves?"

"Had perfect innocence of all sin and all evil thoughts been theirs," said Jesus, "they might have escaped entirely. But by that test, every one of the thousands equally deserved to die. It is only by

the grace of God and His infinite mercy that the rest of you are escaping most of that which your own shortcomings would draw unto you. So why condemn those Galileans who suffered this end, as worse sinners than the rest? I tell you, no; unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Or do you think that those eighteen men killed by the fall of the tower of Siloam were worse offenders than the rest of the residents of Jerusalem? I tell you, no; unless you repent you will all perish as they did. Only by the grace of God, by His mercy which extends to us as far as the east is from the west, do we, too, escape. There is only One who is entirely good, and that is the Father."

"Take Job," Philip persisted. "Would you agree with his three friends that *he* drew his evil fate upon himself?"

"That is different," replied Jesus. "That is the one case in history where Jehovah deliberately reversed the process of Divine Law. For a season he gave this particular portion of the world centering in Job completely into the hands of Satan. The laws of cause and effect were entirely reversed. Life was put wrong end to, merely to see whether Job, thus tempted, would forsake a God who allowed undeserved evil to fall upon one who did good. But Job might have escaped even then had he not left one loophole for evil to enter. Remember he said, 'That of which I was afraid is come upon me.' When one prays, it is not what he says in words that counts but what he says in his heart. When one asks for health in words but in his heart fears that leprosy will come upon him, he is in fact inviting the plague to take possession of him."

"Yet," broke in Matthew, "when Job finally rose equal to the test demanded of him, his inner good was rewarded with homes, children, and prosperity in double portion."

"No matter how dark the evil," commented Jesus. "If one holds his eyes steadfast on God, victory always comes in the end."

As Jesus spoke, with arms extended, he was gazing at the sky. On the hard ground behind him I saw the shadow of the cross. Ringing in my ears were those words I shall never forget. "No matter how dark the evil, if one holds his eyes steadfast on God, victory always comes in the end."

"Look yonder," said Thomas, pointing to a blind beggar a short distance away. "What drew blindness to this man, his sins or the sins of his parents?"

Jesus turned to Thomas and replied, "Neither for his own sin nor his parents!—it was to let the work of God be manifest in him. While daylight lasts, we must be busy with the work of God; night comes, when no one can do any work. Now watch the way the darkness of this man can be turned

into light for the glory of God."

With these words he went up to the blind man and made clay with saliva, which he smeared on the man's eyes, saying, "Go wash your eyes in the pool of Siloam."

Quick to respond to a need, Andrew rose and led him away.

"You still haven't made this clear to me," persisted Thomas. "Would you say point blank that evil is usually drawn upon one by himself?"

"Yes, nearly always," said Jesus. "The poison that one takes in through his lips by eating infected food doesn't compare with the poison one creates within his body by infected thought. When one thinks murder thoughts he is already sowing seeds of death. The time is coming when mankind will recognize the fact that people who throw out thoughts of envy, hate and intolerance are just as dangerous to themselves and society as people who throw poison into wells."

"But there is one thing that bothers me," said Nathanael, the sensitive one, "and that is the statement in the Table of Laws that the sins of the parents will be visited upon their children to the third and fourth generation. That hardly seems fair."

"You forget how that is offset by what follows," said Jesus, "which shows how much more permanent and far reaching is the power of virtue passed on by the parents. 'For I, Jehovah, am a jealous God, visiting the *iniquity* of the fathers upon the *third* and *fourth* generation and' —listen to this— 'showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments!' Contrast that word *thousands* with the words *third* and *fourth*."

"I see!" exclaimed Nathanael. "The power of good is hundreds of times more permanent and far reaching than the power of evil—three hundred times to be exact. If one has enough good, the evil should have no power to resist it?"

"Yes," said Jesus. "Even a tiny deed of good, just a cup of cold water given to one of the least of these in the name of redemptive Love, does not fail to attract its reward." I don't know of anything that gave such a sweeping sense of peace as those words from Jesus.

We were sitting in the quietude of their spell upon us when we saw Andrew hurrying down the road. He spoke a little breathlessly.

"I have a wonderful report to give you! It is a long story, but it happened fast—one thing right after another!

"The man who was born blind washed in the pool of Siloam as you commanded him, and

went home seeing! Whereupon the neighbors and those to whom he had been a familiar sight as a beggar said, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some said, 'It is'; others said, 'No, but it is like him.' He said, 'I am that man.' So they asked him, 'How were your eyes opened?' When he told them the Pharisees scoffed and rebuked him. 'Give God the praise; this Nazarene you say healed you, we know quite well, is only a sinner.' To which he replied, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner; one thing I do know, that once I was blind and now I can see.' "

Simon turned to the Twelve and said with conviction, "At last I understand the problem of suffering. Its first use is to awaken human sympathy one for another, but its great use is for the glory of God. What we have just witnessed will redound to His glory as long as time shall last."

CHAPTER 18: INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS

AFTER THE HEALING of the man born blind, a delegation of Pharisees came down from Jerusalem and asked for a special interview with Jesus.

"Your positive teachings are all right," their chief spokesman said to him, "but you are leading people astray by not protecting them against evil. Evil is all around them, and you see it not. It is in the dirt of the market place and shop. Some of your disciples eat with unwashed hands. The tradition of the elders command that all wash their hands up to the wrists before every meal, that everything brought from the market should be washed before eating, that the cups and jugs and basins and beds should all be washed, and you not once remind them of these things.

"Neither are you neat about keeping the Sabbath. That should especially be kept clean of all action and of all deeds. You use it to heal the sick and teach the multitudes. And the fast days you neglect entirely. It is these fast days and Sabbath days that help good Israelites to keep clean of evil."

"The best way to keep clean of evil," replied Jesus, "is to be so filled with Love that no evil can enter, or if it does enter, it cannot take root."

"Love is the excuse weak people offer for breaking the law," insinuated the Pharisee. "Love is milk for babies. Law is meat for men. Through law and law alone are the sanctuaries kept clean."

"Your emphasis upon cleanliness," replied Jesus, "is, alas, only on the outer things. You make clean the outside of the cup and platter without washing the inside where the putrid and nasty

remains. Tombs in the cemetery look imposing enough when plenty of whitewash is on them to cover the cracks, but inside they are full of dead men's bones. You blind Pharisees! You must first clean the inside of the cup and the dish so that the outside may be clean too. Like whitewashed tombs, outwardly you appear to men to be upright but within you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

"You have heard the Scriptures read so often that your hearing capacity has become hardened. Your hearts have been pounded on so long with old laws that the new truths I am trying to bring you do not penetrate. Little children can grasp the message of the Love of God in this fresh way before you can. Some people take so much time straining a gnat out of their soup that they cannot see the camel reach down and drink it all up."

Judas touched my shoulder and drew me aside. "Now he has done it!" he whispered in my ear. "He believes that only parts of the ancient Jewish law are of value. This is the ultimate heresy in the eyes of the Pharisees. They will never forgive him."

When the visitors had left, Thomas rushed up to Jesus. "Do you know," he declared, "that the Pharisees have taken offense at what you said?"

Jesus replied calmly, "Any plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone. They are blind guides of the blind, and if one blind man leads another, both of them will fall into a pit."

The awareness of where this was going to lead filled me with such apprehension and gloom that I hurried to Zebedee's home where I could take refuge until the controversy should blow over. Every time it came up I could hear the sound of a nail being driven into a cross, and I simply could not stand it.

The next day Zebedee entered the house almost as distraught as I was.

"Now it has happened!" he announced. "Jesus cast out an evil spirit from a man by the power of the inner presence of God. The Pharisees claimed that he did it because he had a strange unclean spirit within *himself*. They even named it Beelzebub. I never saw Jesus as aroused. He is usually so forgiving, but this claim of theirs, he said, no man, not even God, can forgive—the blasphemy of calling the Holy Spirit of God an unclean spirit of evil! And were they bitter in return! This bodes good for no one."

"You and I know that he is the Messiah," Zebedee concluded in a lowered voice, "but the people still think he is the Forerunner of the Messiah. The Pharisees are directing all their attack to

expose him before the people as an impostor—that he is not even the Forerunner.

"The Forerunner should be able to derive signs from heaven, so they asked him for a sign today. He gave them a sign regarding the future in a way that none of us understood—that the Son of Man would be three days and nights in the heart of the earth."

Even as we were talking, two figures whom I supposed were James and John came in and seated themselves behind me on the nets of Zebedee. There was a heaviness in the air. I knew, then, that Jesus was not with them. Presently a very strange feeling came over me. I moved restlessly in my seat, and suddenly looked around to find Iscariot staring at me. It was he and the Zealot who had entered. In the silence that followed, I glanced again at Judas and found him still looking at me. I had the feeling one gets in a dream when he finds some creature continually eyeing him. It was as though he were looking me through and through, detecting my thoughts, aware that I belonged to some alien people and was perhaps a spy in their midst. How terribly discerning he was! Was it possible that he suspected I knew more about events which he was to be mixed up in than I was supposed to know—perhaps that I knew more about him than he felt it was good for me to know? The others had been accepting me so unconcernedly, so innocently as one of themselves, that I had grown to feel as though I had always belonged to them. And I was so tremendously interested in everything I had been observing, so fascinated by the words I had been hearing, that it had almost dropped out of my consciousness that I did know more about events that were going to happen than any of the rest of them except Jesus himself—yes, that I knew more about Judas Iscariot's future than perhaps it was healthy for me to know.

Then a great desire took hold of me, a veritable passion that almost shook me, so strong was its hold upon me—a desire to save Judas from what I knew was ahead of him; and a violent, inordinate desire to save Jesus from the misunderstanding, the terrible misunderstanding and hate of the Pharisees and those that were with them. It gave me some comfort to recall that there was no hate for him among the common people, although there might be much misconception of his teachings. But from the leaders—the religious leaders—ah, that is where protection was needed!

Startled, I looked again at Judas. His eyes dropped before my gaze as though reading my thoughts. My heart went out to him. "O Judas," I cried, "what can we do to keep people from misunderstanding Jesus?"

He sank down on a pile of rope beside the Zealot, who had been sitting there as still as a

sphinx, and rested his chin in his right hand, swinging an end of the rope with his other.

"I'm afraid that nothing can be done," he sighed. "He is so stiff-necked on some things."

Just then John came in.

"Who?" he inquired. "Who is stiff-necked? But I'm glad I found you, Judas. Jesus has just been giving away all that he has to the people, feeding them out here. He was looking for you. He wants more to give. You carry the bag."

"And it is a good thing," retorted Judas, "that I wasn't there, for he would have given away everything."

"Why do the religious leaders misunderstand Jesus?" I asked Judas, rising to go with him to Jesus.

"Sit down," he commanded. "I am not going to him. He can come to me. People misunderstand him because he is not only stiff-necked but he is so unusual about it. He does such strange things. He says that *he* is the way, the truth and the life. He tells his disciples not to study books but to study *him*. 'You will have books always,' he says; 'you will have me only a short time.' And then he tells us to eat him and drink him. That gets the Sadducees wrathful. And he says he can forgive sins. That turns the Pharisees mad with hate. And he breaks *every* rule in the ancient Law. I don't know what we can do about it."

"He is not stiff-necked," said John. "He is like water; he is as meek as the flowing stream."

"But as determined on reaching his goal as the stream," I added.

"That is the same as stiff-necked," insisted Judas.

"No," reasoned John. "It is meekness in the highest degree. Like the flowing stream, he flows into any form anyone demands. When people come to him to be healed he doesn't command them, he lets them command him."

"What do you mean?" I asked, stimulated as I was always stimulated by John's words.

"I mean," said John, "that Jesus never *makes* things come to pass. His mighty works are, as my father says, *born* into manifestation. Without the faith of the one who seeks help joining with the faith of Jesus who wants to grant the help, nothing whatever happens. And this is what I mean by the meekness of Jesus. Jesus not only waits upon the faith of the one he heals, but he even accommodates his entire method of healing to the faith of the one he would help."

· "What do you mean by that?" I asked.

"Watch the way Jesus heals people. Every time it is he who obeys them instead of making them obey him."

"Give us an instance," demanded Judas, stubborn to the last.

In answer John put up a silencing hand. He pointed to the crowd gathering rapidly around Jesus just outside our door. We all rose and placed ourselves in the doorway where we could get a good view of the throng. A leper was coming toward Jesus. People were clearing a lane for him as pigeons scatter when a dog approaches. He prostrated himself on the ground before Jesus and cried, "Lord, if you *choose* you can make me clean."

Jesus looked down at him, and I could see love light up his eyes. Then quietly he replied in a clear voice, "I do *choose*. Be you made clean."

People gasped as they saw Jesus speak so easily, making no effort whatever, not even lifting his eyes in prayer. Now they gasped even more at what happened. Even from where I stood, I could see the unearthly, ashen white of the other's face and chest change to a healthy color. I saw the healthy hue spread till it covered his half-naked body. The man rose, looked down upon his transformed flesh, gave a great shout, and leaped for joy.

"I shall tell all the city!" he cried.

Jesus laid his hand upon his shoulder and said, "No, my friend. Tell no man of this. Go your way and show yourself to the priest and make him an offering in gratitude for your cleansing. Do that and that only. Thank the Father through the synagogue. Do not thank me."

John turned to us standing in the doorway and said, "Yesterday a centurion told him to command his servant to be well and he would be well. Jesus obeyed, and the servant became well. The day before that two men asked him to have mercy upon them and he said. 'I do have mercy,' and—"

The rest of his words were drowned out by the shout of a Roman officer, somewhat higher than the office of centurion, although I cannot remember the title they gave him, who had pressed forward and was accosting Jesus. Whether or not he had been returning from a banquet where he had drunk too much wine I know not, but none of the group was prepared for the violent onslaught he made upon the Master.

"Dog of a Jew!" he roared, taking his stand facing Jesus. "It is all very well for you to speak with authority as long as you confine it to bringing healing and other humble service to your masters.

But mark you well, the moment you let this little authority of yours go to your head and you listen even for one minute to the mob that was yelling yesterday that they wanted to make you king, that moment your body will be drawn and quartered and cast to the dogs in the street. Do you hear?"

Jesus looked at him with composure but made no reply. The situation was very tense. No one spoke. The Roman was feeling for his sword. Finally I could stand it no longer. To Philip who was standing beside me I whispered, "Why doesn't Jesus speak? Why doesn't he tell him that he runs away from the crowd whenever they seek to make him king, that he—"

I never finished. For I saw that the officer had dropped his sword back in its scabbard. His whole manner began to change. He ceased to roar and spoke more quietly. But the domineering tone was still there.

"I will give you a chance to prove your innocence. I, as your superior in this city and as a member of a superior race, command you to heal the son who bears my name and who is to inherit my fortune. Listen, Jew, you worker of signs and wonders, put your gift for once to good account and heal my son."

"I never heal," said Jesus. "Only God heals."

"You lie, you dog of a Jew!" The Roman was almost white with wrath. "You heal others—a centurion's Jewish servant, bah! And then refuse to heal one in whose veins runs the blood of Cicero himself."

"I never heal anyone," repeated Jesus quietly. "Only the Father heals—and He heals only on certain conditions."

"Do you mean that you refuse?" The officer was again reaching for his sword.

"Only God heals," Jesus stood before him in that gentle majesty that always was his when dangerous men confronted him. "The Father is the healer, not your Neptune of the angry sea, nor your Mars of the bloody sword. And He never heals when anger and pride take control."

"And so my religion is not good enough for you?" sneered the other. "What room in the Temple in Jerusalem does your doddering old God occupy, pray?"

"Neither in Jerusalem, nor in your Rome will you find Him confined to any room. For God is Spirit—the spirit of Love—and he who worships Him must worship Him in Love, Humility and Truth."

"I refuse to bow down to your soft-kneed God, Jew. My god must have something greater than

love! Leave that for women. But stop this talk of gods. Obey my command, and heal my son!"

"I come only to the lost sheep of the tribe of Israel." And without a further word, Jesus turned and went quietly on his way.

The Roman stood thunderstruck. The crowd, also amazed at the courage and calmness of Jesus, now surged forward. Angry voices burst forth. The officer, sensing their hostility, evidently considered discretion wiser, and calling his servants about him, silently withdrew.

The others, filled with wonder and admiration, were following Jesus. I hurried after them. Overtaking Nathanael, I asked: "What did Jesus mean when he said he came only to the lost sheep of Israel?"

But Nathanael's attention was on something else. He had turned and was staring at two of the disciples who were struggling to hold back someone in the crowd. "Look yonder!" he exclaimed. A woman was trying desperately to break free from the restraint of the two. To my amazement the men were James and John.

"Loose her and let her go," said Jesus. "What does she want?"

"Here is a Syrophenician woman," explained James, "a half-breed from the north country, with no blood of Israel in her. She knows nothing of our Jehovah, for we asked her. She has never read the Law and the Scriptures. She merely wants to use you as a wonder-worker, a necromancer to perform a miracle upon her daughter. She is just as much an outsider as that Roman officer you turned away just now."

"O Master," implored the woman, "if you could see my daughter—the only one I have on earth—all bent in pain and suffering, cruelly possessed by a demon! Do heal her! Call down your incantations and work your charms for her, and I will be eternally grateful."

Jesus looked at her steadily, seeing something that the rest did not see. Finally he said in an even voice, "But you do not understand the spiritual requirements that my people have been nurtured in. It is not fair to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs."

She knelt before him in great humility. Tender love shone from her eyes. "I would not take one iota of what does not belong to me, but under their master's table the dogs do pick up the children's crumbs, do they not? All I ask is a tiny crumb of your prayer and your blessing."

"O woman, you have shown great faith by the words you have spoken. Even though you have not been nurtured in the Law and the Prophets you have grasped the spirit of God. Your

prayer is granted as you wish. The demon has left your daughter. Go in peace."

CHAPTER 19: JESUS DINES WITH SIMON THE PHARISEE

AS JAMES LEFT us standing by the doorway of Zebedee's house, John turned to me and said, "Jesus is now on his way to dine with Simon the Pharisee, a powerful influence in Capernaum. Jesus accepts every invitation, whether from poor or rich, feeling it just as important to reach the one as the other, but because so many rich have been inviting him lately, some of the people, especially those who follow the Baptizer, complain that he is becoming a winebibber and a glutton."

"So that is another illustration," I said, "of the way he is always obedient to every call that comes."

"Absolutely!" assured John as we began to walk down the path.

"He even demands that we be obedient in the same way," added Andrew, "and what is more, he believes in the first impression, the first call, the first command that presses itself upon a man's ear, or the first words that spontaneously leave a man's lips."

"Jesus also gets much of his guidance by obeying the first person he meets in a city," said James. "Indeed, when he sends us on preaching missions he tells us to accept the first invitation we receive and no matter how crude the abode, to remain in that home during the entire mission in that city. In some cities it is a rich man and we enjoy fine and sumptuous quarters with servants to attend our every need; in some cities the first person to ask us is the town good-for-nothing and we go to his hovel, even though the second person who invites us might be the richest man in town."

"Just why does Jesus act that way?" snapped Judas.

"Because he is not stiff-necked," said John with a smile. "Because he is so obedient to the command of others."

Judas did not relish this pleasantry, if pleasantry it was intended to be.

"I consider that to be the height of stiff-neckedness!" he countered with a dark frown. "It is a stubbornness to cling to a superstition of that kind, and still greater stubbornness to require all the rest of us to follow the same method."

"It is not so much his command," replied John, "as it is his advice. But if we be sincere pupils eager to learn the true secrets of our Master, we, too, should be obedient to follow him and learn from him. It is remarkable the way he receives guidance from his Father. He uses the same method to secure his Father's complete cooperation in his healing. He trusts the first words that cross the threshold of his patient's lips, the first impulsion of the one who comes to be healed. For instance, when one says, 'If you would only touch your hand to my head I would be healed,' Jesus instantly puts his hand upon the man's head. When a man says, 'If I could only kneel at your feet my sins would roll away,' Jesus lets him kneel. When a man says, 'If I fast for a week and then come to you for healing I know that I could be healed.' Jesus permits him to fast, even though he himself does not observe the fast days that the priests insist upon. In other words, if a person can channel his faith along some outward act in such a way as to manifest the trust that Jesus knows is necessary, he lets him use that particular act, whatever it may be."

"In that case," observed Philip, "people of any faith, accustomed to any ritual, could find a welcome with Jesus and could derive the help and healing he needs through his own religion or rite."

Andrew broke in. "Only one condition does he require of all."

"And what is that?"

"That they love the Lord their God with all their strength and love their neighbor as they love themselves. That is the only religion he preaches."

These remarks interested me so immensely that I just had to ask a question: "His first test of guidance, then, is get in tune with the Father and act without the slightest fear, hesitation or doubt?"

"Yes," said John.

"What if you are not in conjunction with the Father?" broke in Thomas.

"Yes," said Judas, "there you have said it. His method of guidance is all right for him, but what about the rest of us who cannot always keep in tune with the Father? My second and third choices are always better for me. It isn't till I fight off the first and second and often third approach to a problem that I begin to get the right one."

"You mean it takes you that long to get in tune with our Father?" asked Andrew.

"Yes, and even then I'm not sure that I am rightly in tune. I may be in tune with the evil

one."

"Then wash out the things that block," advised John. "If you have ten hours to work till darkness comes, better take five hours for getting in tune with the Heavenly Father and then work five hours, than to work for ten while out of tune with Him."

"I found that true ever since I have been a follower of Jesus," asserted Simon Peter, who had been strangely silent for him. "Whenever I am out of tune with God I always cast my net on the wrong side to catch any fish. When I am in union with God I throw it out on the right side, and my net nearly breaks with the size of the catch. I have found from experience that better one hour of right-side fishing than a whole night of wrong-side fishing."

"Jesus himself told us," remarked Matthew, "that laborers who start working in the eleventh hour, if they are in tune with the Master, are paid the same amount as those who work all day."

So the conversation waxed on until we reached a little food shop where we ate porridge and fish and ended with a handful of delicious dates. When we were through, Andrew said, "Follow me. I know the way."

As we walked through the narrow Capernaum streets I asked Nathanael where we were going.

"To the house of Simon the Pharisee."

"Have we been invited?"

Nathanael smiled as though I were trying to be facetious and made no reply.

It was sometime later that we arrived at the house of Simon. To my surprise, without knocking the others started to walk right in. "Surely, we are not going in while they are eating and without an invitation!" I said to Nathanael.

"Now I know that you must have come from far distant parts," he replied, still smiling. "You evidently are not acquainted with our customs. In all of Palestine we can enter any home while people are eating. Indeed it is one of the afternoon sources of entertainment for the poor, to sit in rich men's houses and watch them eat and listen to their talk. The very poorest often clutch at the scraps thrown from the rich man's table. When filled with wine, some of the rich guests, to amuse themselves, throw choice bits among the poor to see who can scramble for them the fastest. Sometimes they even make wagers on who will get the most."

"Do you see any of the very poor here?" I asked.

"Very few," replied Nathanael. "We all took special pains to guard the fact that Jesus was coming here, for fear a mob might molest the diners. Indeed, Simon especially requested that no word be sent out about this, as he wanted to talk with Jesus undisturbed. What is more, if there are any poor here they will take pains not to descend to acts of foolishness, as Simon wants everything conducted with dignity when he entertains so distinguished a guest."

"Then Simon appreciates Jesus?" I asked.

"Yes, he is one of the Nicodemus group. I think he is attracted by Jesus' wonderful power in healing. He may have some sick relative that he wishes to see healed. Or he may be interested chiefly in the new discoveries that he thinks Jesus is making in prayer."

Matthew leaned forward and whispered in my ear, "That is the real reason," he said. "I knew Simon well when I was a tax gatherer. He is a man very curious about ideas—a student of Aristotle and the Greeks. He wants to see what constitutes a prophet. As a Pharisee he has made a special study of the Hebrew prophets and feels that Jesus belongs to that class. He said he would be honored to have a prophet in his home."

We were now seated along the edge of the wall on the floor, watching the diners. The meal was only half over and the guests were lingering in long conversation between courses. About ten were present at the table, a very impressive group of merchants and scholars. Jesus reclined nearest us. In his fine garment all of one piece and with his flowing hair and beautiful beard, he looked no less distinguished than the rest—marvelously handsome man. But the moment one looked at the eyes one cared nothing about the handsomeness. I would never get over my wonder at that look of great love and compassion and the glorious light on his face.

After awhile, a Sadducee came in and sat beside us. "I saw you enter and I imagined that your Master must be with you," he said. "He does not suffer for want of fine food, I see."

Judas glowered at him and would have spoken angrily, but Andrew nudged him in the side with his elbow.

Now a woman had entered and sat down also, weeping and holding her head in her hands. She, too, had seen us coming and had guessed our destination. The Sadducee looked at her with disdain and edged close to me, leaving a wide gap between him and her. Still weeping she rose, went forward and, to our amazement, knelt at the feet of Jesus and began to wash his feet with her tears and wipe them with strands of her long hair. She opened a little box and shook drops of

perfume from it upon his feet.

The Sadducee whispered to me, "Now Simon will know that Jesus is no prophet, for the truest test of a prophet according to Hillel is his power to discern the character of the people one deals with. And this woman is a sinner and should not be allowed to touch a prophet."

John whispered to me, "Watch the way Jesus accepts whatever anyone feels led to do, if it be a spontaneous, first impulse. Watch closely and you will see that he will not send her away. While washing the dust from the feet of Jesus, she is in reality washing the sins away from her own soul, although she herself knows it not."

"How can this be?" asked Judas. The dual between him and John seemed ever to be growing wider. "It is absurd that what one does to another person is being done to oneself."

"Is not that one of the Master's central teachings?" pursued John. "That as you mete out to others it will be measured to you?"

"All that is beyond me," muttered Judas under his breath. And from that moment I knew that Judas would never be changed.

Jesus addressed Simon.

"Simon," he said, "I have something to say to you."

"Speak, teacher," he said.

"There is something in your mind and in the minds of others here that leads me to tell you this. There was a money-lender who had two debtors; one owed him five hundred pence, the other fifty. As they were unable to pay, he freely forgave them both. Tell me, now, which of them will love him most?"

"I suppose," said Simon, "the man who had most forgiven."

"Quite right," he said. Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "You see this woman? When I came into your house you did not give me water for my feet, while she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair; you gave me no kiss, while ever since she came in she has kept pressing kisses on my feet; you did not anoint my head with oil, while she has anointed my feet with perfume. Therefore I tell you, many as her sins are, they are forgiven, for her love is great; whereas he to whom little is forgiven has but little love."

And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

The Sadducee beside me sneered, "Who is this, to forgive even sin?"

But Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

She rose and slipped silently out of the room, a look of infinite peace and gratitude upon her face. Simon was profoundly moved by what he had heard and seen. So was John. And so was I.

CHAPTER 20: QUELLING STORMS

ONE MORNING the crowd around Jesus was augmented by a vast number from neighboring cities, many of whom seemed to know Simon the Zealot very well.

"They are members of the Revolutionist party," Nathanael explained. "They are the modern Gideon's Band secretly preparing to overthrow the Roman power. They have come to see whether Jesus is the one to lead their revolution."

"God forbid!" said Philip frowning. "Then every one of us will be crucified. We must get rid of this crowd."

"No," said Nathanael. "You will find them very receptive to Jesus' words."

They were indeed very receptive, and Jesus healed many after he had addressed them in parables. One of them, in his enthusiasm cried out, "You are the man we want for King!" Thereupon followed a great roar of approval. The cry became a contagion and presently everyone was shouting at the top of his voice.

Jesus lifted his hand and finally quieted them.

"Do you not know that they that would achieve their ends by the sword shall perish by the sword? No, my friends, seek first the Kingdom of heaven and its righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you—even freedom from the Roman yoke. Now go in peace."

He turned to the Twelve, then, and said, "Let us cross to the other side at once." Quickly Peter and Andrew helped him into their boat and with four others pushed off.

"John and I have room for the rest of you in our boat," said James. So another seven of us climbed into his boat. Matthew and I sat in the stern and Thomas sat alone in the bow. Four, seated in pairs, did the rowing. John and James hulled the oars in the forward position while Nathanael and Philip were immediately facing me.

I became fascinated watching the long, powerful arms of Nathanael and the wide sweep of

his oar. A wind from the north was rolling whitecaps toward us. Overhead, gathering clouds gave the illusion of night and presently I found myself growing very drowsy. I was sound asleep when a great wave burst upon us, drenching me to the skin and almost filling the boat.

"Start bailing!" shouted James. "You three not rowing, start bailing—fast!"

The waves kept rising in fury until I wondered if our boat—large and strong though it was—could weather the storm. Then, just as suddenly as it came up, the storm subsided. The water became smooth as glass and the oars again took firm grip upon the water.

"I never in my life saw anything happen like this," said Philip.

"That storm almost got us," said Simon Peter when our two crews met on the opposite shore. "But I have something wonderful to tell you! Now I know that Jesus is the Messiah! Even the winds and waves obey him!" In Peter's voice there was awe.

The town of Gadara was set back from the lake and approached by a road along whose sides were cave-like tombs cut out of the rocks. We had hardly landed when a giant figure of a man, completely naked, started rushing down upon us. He had a club in his hands and a wild look in his eyes that boded no good.

"We come out of one storm only to meet another," said Simon Peter, surprisingly calm and unconcerned at this apparition. "Henceforth I am afraid of nothing when Jesus is with us. He calmed one storm. He can calm another."

This confidence was not shared by Nathanael. "I've been here before. This man is known as the Killer of Gadara. He breaks the chains they try to bind him with. No one dares go by this road for fear of him. We must hurry down the beach another way to the city." Then raising his voice he called to all the Twelve, "Let's hurry along the northward shore and avoid these caves that that creature may not harm us."

"No," said Jesus, "let us wait. He seems to be expecting us. Let enough love go forth to this unfortunate one, and no harm shall touch any of you."

The powerful figure was now close upon us, flourishing his club and gnashing his teeth.

For a moment fear seized me and dammed back the flow of love I was trying to send, in self defense, toward him. Then I saw the serene face of Peter upturned toward the sky and I, too, looked up and opened my heart utterly to God. Instantly I felt His great love flow through me and I knew then we were safe. The lunatic stopped in his tracks.

"Your fame has spread before you," he cried. "You are Jesus of Nazareth, who heals the ones beaten down. I am the modern Samson who beats down those who are healed." And he laughed in wild hysteria that made my blood run cold.

"I destroy! I destroy!" he cried and he began to strike his own body with his club and throwing it down, seized a rock and began to gash his cheeks and breast with it.

"Now watch," said John, standing close to me. "You will see that this will not be an easy healing. If the demons are cast out it will be at a price. Someone will suffer. For there is not love enough."

"What do you mean?" I asked, watching the man now wallowing in the dust.
"Jesus loves him."

"Yes, but *he* does not love Jesus. No one in these parts loves Jesus. See, people are coming out of Gadara. They know by the madman's screams that something is happening. They are all staring at Jesus as people stare at a necromancer or a wonder-worker, with eyes popping out of their heads. They are even afraid of him. You see, the fame of his mighty works has traveled faster than the message of his loving heart."

"Is that the reason he so often counsels people not to spread the story of his works?"

"The chief reason, yes. You notice that he does not caution anyone to slow up the spreading of his message of love. That is the 'good tidings' which he urges us to spread in haste. His purpose in selecting us disciples was to do just that thing. But he never takes pains to hasten the story of his mighty works. Love must always lead the way. All his miracles are but the fruits of love."

—and faith," added Nathanael.

"These people here are not countrymen of ours," continued John. "They are Gentiles, or halfbreeds—eaters of swine and worshippers of Astoreth and Baal, not Jehovah. They look upon Jesus as a despised foreigner—a Jew—a magician. Curiosity draws them, curiosity and fear—not love and faith."

The man was now mumbling and screaming, nothing articulate coming from his lips. Jesus suddenly silenced him with a loud voice.

"Come out of the man, you unclean spirit." At once the man relaxed, looked up at Jesus with a wild stare, and fell on his knees.

"Jesus, Son of God," he screamed, "Most High! What business have you with me? By God I adjure you, do not torture me."

"See," said Philip, "the man senses that there is going to be suffering in his cure."

"Hush," said John. "It is not the man but the demons, in him that are crying out. They are the ones who will suffer, not he."

"What is your name?" demanded Jesus.

"If one uses the correct name of the demon he can command it," whispered John. "That is the method of all prophets."

"My name is Legion," came from the lips of the one possessed. "There is a host of us. Send us into someone else."

"No," said Jesus, "you don't belong in the habitation of man."

"Let us enter the wild beasts—or even the sheep yonder."

"No," said Jesus.

"Then let us enter the swine."

"You are like swine and would make men swine," said Jesus, and then in a voice of command, "enter where you belong."

Instantly the man fell to the ground and lay relaxed and limp at Jesus' feet. Jesus reached out and gently raised him up. To my surprise the man had not swooned. He was smiling, and his face was simply transformed by the light of that smile. His eyes were bright and glowing and beautiful; I could hardly believe that he was the same creature.

"Put some garments upon him," said Jesus. "This man will be our apostle to the Gadarenes from this time forward."

"Thank you, thank you, thank you," said the man. And his voice was calm and clear.

Someone cast a mantle over him and led him toward the city. All the rest of the citizens followed, leaving Jesus alone with the disciples. Turning to them Jesus spoke:

"There are worse demons than those which I cast out from this man—the worst kind are those that afflict a multitude of people at the same time. When we crossed the lake just now I was running away from demons, only to run into new demons along the way. A storm in the air is only a reflection of the storm in the soul, and one is just as easy to quell as the other. This afternoon you have seen how a legion of demons can enslave one man. This morning across the lake you saw

how one demon could enslave a legion of people."

"What do you mean, Master?" asked Thomas.

"I mean that when the multitude pressed upon me the other day begging for another miracle of loaves and fishes, they were possessed by the demon of greed. They have never forgotten that I turned water into wine and have never ceased repeating Satan's request to turn stones into bread. Today the fanatic multitude came seeking to make me king in order that I would destroy their conquerors for them. That was the demon of hate—directed at the Romans. Whenever a thought presses in on a multitude that way it is like a demon—to be cast out. But alas, the fanatics of Galilee don't want it cast out.

"When individuals come asking me and desiring in their heart that I cast out their demons I easily cast them out. But when they don't want to be free it comes with effort or causes loss as when these demons went into the swine. Multitudes come possessed with demons that they do *not* want cast out, clinging to them with all their might. Then only God through His great mercy can save them. Then it is that I turn away and leave them alone for awhile with God."

"So when you had us get into the boats," said Matthew, "we were fleeing from demons, not from people?"

"Yes," said Jesus. "From the demonic desire to destroy the Roman power by force."

Just then we saw the crowd returning from the city.

"A drove of swine," exclaimed their spokesman, "has rushed into the sea. The word is being spread that the demons you cast out from the giant entered into them and destroyed them. Please, we beg of you, leave these parts, immediately lest worse things befall us."

"We shall go," said Jesus.

"Let me go with you," cried a tall, handsome man. I had to look twice to realize that he was the lunatic, now bathed and clothed and in his right mind.

"No," said Jesus gently, "go home to your own people and report to them all the Lord has done for you and how He took pity on you."

And as we turned and trudged northward I found that I was pondering all that Jesus had been telling us. The craving of the multitude for God to produce a king who could raise up, as by magic, an army to move and act with power—oh, how like it was in my own day—the day when the demon of Power Politics was in control of the nations of the world! So fixed are these demon

thoughts, these lusts for ease, for wealth, for power, that I wondered how Jesus, then or now, could ever cast them out! And the terrible demon-thoughts of jealousy and hate that possessed the Pharisees! Because the people of Palestine did not make haste to want these demons cast out, because they did not become poor in spirit and pure in heart, and because they did not hunger and thirst eagerly enough for righteousness, the demons in them were destined to destroy both them and him. It seemed as though all Palestine right then was possessed of demons. It was as though all the children of mammon were marshaling their forces to cast out the Son of Light.

As we walked on in thoughtful silence I found John at my side.

"What is a demon?" I asked him. John was the only one who seemed able to answer my deeper questions.

He replied, "The demons are the outer thoughts, the thoughts that destroy and take. The angels are the inner thoughts, the thoughts that save and give. He who lives amid the inward thoughts lives in the Kingdom; he who lives in the outer thoughts lives in hell. Jesus came to put men in heaven and save them from hell, to tell men how to turn within and live in the Kingdom here and now."

"How can he destroy these demon thoughts that do not willingly leave the people and which they do not willingly part with?" I asked.

"If a man clings to rubbish when it is cast out into Gehenna, then he, too, along with the rubbish which he clings to, will also be cast out into Gehenna."

"Then all will be destroyed? Is there no other way?"

"Apparently the only other way to make men lose their clinging to outward thoughts is for one to die, Jesus tells us. For that reason it is beginning to grow very clear to him, he says, that he must let these demon thoughts, these demon desires and demon hates of people that are seeking to make him king, and of the Pharisees seeking to make him a victim—he must let those thoughts lift him up—what he means I do not know—and destroy his body. Only by giving his body a ransom for the many who are obsessed by outer thoughts, he says, can he awaken their love sufficiently for them to look within and find the kingdom. Sometimes it seems clear that it is actual death he means—for he so often speaks of himself as a sheep led to the slaughter—and sometimes it is life I think he means, for he always speaks as though he can pick himself out of the tomb they lay him in. In case they try to kill him, I think he will rise right up above the torture and move away to

safety, and they will find they cannot touch him, even as when he moved from the crowd on the Nazareth hill and none could touch him. And yet—and yet—at that time and at other times he says, "They cannot hurt me for my time has not yet come." What means he by this? My time! My time! What is that time?"

CHAPTER 21: TOWARD THE MOUNTAIN

AND NOW I began to realize that this urge of Jesus to leave the people and flee northward, sprang from a deep intuition—his gift of divine guidance—that made everyone who was close to him, even the suspicious Judas and the questioning Thomas, stand in awe and wonder before him. It was a spiritual compulsion so contagious that all those about him were swept up by it—this recurring urge to leave the multitudes and slip away to mountains or desert where there would be silence long and deep enough for a revelation to be born.

As we moved into the north country, into the region of Caesarea Philippi, walking most of the time in silence, it seemed to me that all nature shared the inner knowledge that was sweeping us onward. I could feel it in the very cells and tissues of my body, as a plum tree heavy with plums would feel, if it were a sentient creature, just before the plums fell into the hands reaching out to grasp them. I felt as the salmon must feel in the tissues of their gleaming bodies as they slither upstream to spawn and die. I knew for the first time how the doe must feel as she withdraws into the thicket to cast her young. As I looked at the group walking on in silence, I thought of a gentle mother hen about to hatch a brood of twelve little living creatures out of the symmetrical shells she had been warming under her wings.

It was strange the way this mutual silence persisted. No one felt like speaking. The very atmosphere through which we moved seemed heavy and pregnant, I had a feeling that if anyone should speak overloud it might precipitate a great downpour—a cloudburst—a veritable flood from heaven itself.

Near the outskirts of Caesarea Philippi we came in sight of Mt. Hermon. Everyone gave a sigh of relief. As our eyes were lifted, it seemed that the weight in our hearts was lifted also. We quickened our steps and at last Jesus broke the silence:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." He ceased abruptly and nodded to the others. As actors in a play respond to the cue, they took up the refrain where he had left off. "My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. . . ." and on and on went the chant until the end of the psalm was reached. Jesus himself joined in at the close, his full rich voice pouring soul into the body of the words: "The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even for evermore."

It was, I had noted, a custom of Jesus on long journeys to start a psalm and then let his followers take it up and continue it to the close much as a Greek chorus reciting the antistrophe following the strophe.

After reciting a few more psalms in this way, each one lifting the consciousness of the Twelve a little higher, he suddenly turned upon them and asked with a deep, new urgency, "Who do the people say that I am?" Now I sensed that the precipitation would start, now the flood would begin.

"Some say you are a prophet," said Simon the Zealot, "that God has sent to become king."

"Some say," said Matthew, "that you are a reincarnation of Elijah in the form of the Forerunner of the coming Messiah."

"Some say you are John the Baptist come back," broke in Andrew.

"All agree," said Philip, "that in some way or other you are the Forerunner that Israel has been looking forward to."

Jesus' eyes were very bright and clear as he stood before them, and a glory such as I had never seen before seemed to shine from his face and head. His voice was strong and insistent.

"And who do you say that I am?"

Like an avalanche suddenly dislodged by the report of some mighty weapon, Simon, son of Jonas, burst forth in a trembling, eager voice,

"You are the Son of the living God—not a reincarnation of prophets of the past, nor a Forerunner of a Messiah of the future—you *are the Messiah himself!*"

The effect of these words on the group was tremendous. Most of the Twelve were trembling. It was as though some gigantic power had been released on earth, something as elemental as the earth itself, as cosmic as the stars in their courses, as celestial as heaven above. All, I thought, must be aware that the divine revelation we had been waiting for was born right here in

the shadow of the mountain gleaming above us.

"Flesh and blood hath not revealed this to you, Simon, son of Jonas,"—every word that Jesus spoke seemed to vibrate the very air we breathed—*"but your Father that is in heaven.* This moment you have been a clear, inspired channel for the Father to speak through even as those rock-ribbed mountains ahead of us are clear channels for the life-giving water that falls from heaven to flow into the Jordan all summer long when other streams run dry. All streams in this land are built on river beds of silt and sand and have their periods of drought. Only the Jordan, whose bed is solid rock, has water eternally flowing. From now on your name shall have new meaning: Peter, the solid rock, hewed out and shaped to be a true channel of God."

He paused and his eyes, filled with the glory of God, fell upon each of us in turn as he continued slowly and impressively as though weighing each word: "Upon this rock I shall establish my church. The only ministry I crave is that of men who can become channels for the heavenly Father to speak the message through them. Such a ministry will form the foundation stones for a church that nothing can destroy. Through such a Church the sick shall be healed, demons shall be cast out, wars shall cease and the Kingdom of heaven itself shall come to earth."

Jesus raised his eyes to the sky. Then he looked again upon his disciples and said, "Because of this revelation you know now what I have meant when I say the Father and I are one and He abides in me and I abide in Him, and what I do is not of myself but of the Father who sent me. Now listen very carefully for what I have to say few of you will believe. Although I am the only *begotten* Son of God, you too can become reborn sons of God."

"How can we become reborn?" exclaimed Philip, who had been following Jesus with rapt attention.

"Yes," said Andrew, "what can take the place of our soul that our mother's womb did for our body?"

"Why the concern about outer things?" asked Jesus. "The womb of the mother is merely the outer manifestation of her inner love. The womb of the soul is the Love of God. Only as you abide in the body of the Love of God as the embryo abides in the body of the mother will you ever be born again."

"This is so confusing to our human minds," said Thomas. "if you could put it all into one word . . ."

"That word," interrupted Jesus, "is meekness. It is meekness to the last degree. Just as the embryo has no will of its own—its only will is the mother's will, so your rebirth will wait until you have completely merged your will into the Father's will. When you have melted and merged your human personality into such humility and selflessness that to serve becomes your only passion, then you are close to the Kingdom of heaven. Verily, verily I say unto you, he that would be first among you must be as a servant; he that would be greatest of all shall be as a slave."

"But," exclaimed Matthew, "you are the greatest of all who have ever walked this earth and you are our master, not our slave."

"Matthew," said Jesus, and oh, such gentleness and love was in his voice, "you are the one of the twelve that is always scanning the Scriptures to find prophecies regarding this time. Behold in Israel's description of the suffering servant he is really describing me. And you will find in Deuteronomy the price set for a man-slave will someday be the price paid for me. I came not to be ministered unto but to minister. So as I go now to be alone with the Father, remain here as a loving wall of protection about me. If any sick or suffering ones come seeking me, use the channeled power that humility bestows upon you and send them away whole."

Then while the glory of the Father still shone around him, he took Peter and James and John and went up into the high mountain, leaving the rest of us to keep close guard so none of the throng that would soon gather should follow him up the trail.

CHAPTER 22: RETURN TO THE VALLEY

HARDLY HAD Jesus departed when as though drawn by a magnet the people began to appear.

"Send them away," said Judas. "We can't heal and they know we can't heal. What could have possessed Jesus to say such a thing?"

"Let us draw apart and pray awhile," said Nathanael. "This crowd is a challenge. Only as we become meek enough can we be worthy to minister to them. We must be unto them as slaves."

"Absurd," protested Simon the Zealot. "We are free men. You won't catch me playing the part of a slave."

"Nor I," mumbled Judas. "Unless we quit this nonsense I am through!"

There followed an agitated discussion among the disciples. It was finally interrupted by a kindly, intelligent-looking man whose face was drawn with sorrow and concern.

"Good men," he said, "where is the Master from Nazareth? I traced him all these miles and must find him."

"What is your need?" asked Andrew.

"It is my son," he replied. "He falls into fits, and foams at the mouth, and no one can tell when the demon will attack him."

"I am sorry," said Andrew. "Jesus will not be here today. He is on the mountain, apart with the Father. But if you will get still enough we might tune in with the Master and let some of the power he and his heavenly Father possess flow into your son."

"Ah," I thought to myself, "now the healing will come from Andrew, for he is the selfless brother of Peter the Rock, and the purest channel among these left below. His very selflessness and lack of jealousy toward his brother makes him the perfect fulfillment of Jesus' commission to us before he departed."

"Bring your son," said Philip. "Our friend here can help him."

"Yes," said Nathanael, laying his large hand on the father's shoulder and together they went into the crowd to get the boy. Meanwhile Judas and the Zealot on each side of Andrew were poring remonstrances into his ear.

"You will fail," warned Simon. "You will bring this whole movement into disrepute before the crowd."

"Only Jesus can heal," declared Judas. "And it is because of his personality. His talk of God is only a figure of speech. It is his will power, his hypnotic power that does it. When we quit this silly healing business and convince Jesus that he should use his clairvoyant power against Rome, all this drudgery with the mobs will be over."

I seized Philip by the arm.

"Can't we stop those two?" I begged. "If we let discord and divided viewpoints take control, all the power Jesus wanted channelled into this situation will be drained off."

"It is certainly not a good example," rejoined Philip, "of two or three agreeing together. Before he had time for further answer the boy was kneeling at the feet of Andrew. With Judas and

Simon scowling upon him from either side, Andrew proceeded to rest his hands upon the lad's head and pray. Finally the boy, assisted by Nathanael, arose, trembling all over.

"Alas," moaned the father, "he is worse than ever. Can't any of you help? Have I come all this way for nothing?"

"Let me pray," cried Nathanael, his heart overflowing with compassion. "I can remember some methods of Jesus. If I can say the right words something may happen."

But I could see that his faith was not equal to it. His prayer was weak, a mere reciting of words, and the scoffing, critical eyes of Judas and Simon were enough to quench any power they may have possessed.

"Let us see what a strong will can do," said Thomas, with a glance at Judas, "we haven't yet tried commanding the demon to depart. Maybe your prayers," nodding to Andrew and Nathanael, "have prepared the way. Let me try."

Very elaborately he arranged the stage as for a drama that was to be enacted. He told the father to stand behind the son with his hands upon his shoulders. Then commanding the boy to fix his eyes upon his own and gazing hypnotically into the eyes of the boy he cried in a loud voice, "Unclean spirit, I command you to come out of him. Begone. Leave. Depart."

The boy cringed away from him, turned and clung to his father, sobbing in terror.

"There, there," said the father. "Don't cry. He was just trying to help you, boy. He meant no harm."

All this aroused quite a turmoil in the crowd, hot and weary from their long tramp in the sun. Voices, jeering and threatening, rent the air.

Three rather dignified looking men stepped forward and quelled the crowd. "We are scribes from Jerusalem," the oldest shouted, "and we have come to warn you mistaken ones against running after this charlatan, Jesus, who breaks all the laws of the Sabbath and sets himself to be a prophet sent from God. What you have just witnessed should convince you of your folly in being influenced by him. These, his closest followers, have no power to heal or help any of you. They are all impostors. Have nothing to do with them."

"See here," demanded Thomas, and there was anger in his voice, "no one is going to call me an impostor—" But before he could speak further a shout went up from the crowd.

"There is Jesus now!" and they all left the scribes and the disciples and rushed up the

mountainside to meet him. The disciples also hurried toward him and when we reached him he asked Andrew, "What were you discussing with them?" But before Andrew could answer, the father of the boy knelt before Jesus and said, "Teacher, I brought my son, my only boy, to you. He has a dumb spirit and whenever it seizes him it throws him down and he foams at the mouth and grinds his teeth. He is wasting away with it, so I told your disciples to cast it out and they could not."

Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said, "What have you been doing all these days that you have been followers of mine? Had you a grain of true faith you could have healed this one. Do you think that I have been performing miracles merely to exhibit my power? No, but to reveal the power of my Father in heaven. He can do these mighty works through you if you only believe! Oh, faithless and perverse generation, how long must I still be with you? How long have I to bear with you? Bring me the boy."

As soon as they brought the boy face to face with Jesus, a convulsion seized the lad and he fell to the ground and rolled about foaming at the mouth.

"How long has he been like this?" Jesus asked the father.

"From childhood," he replied. "It has thrown him into fire or water many a time to destroy him. If you can do anything do help us, do have pity on us!"

Jesus exclaimed, "If you *can*!" Anything can be done for one who believes."

At once the father replied, "I do believe. Help my unbelief."

"Deaf and dumb spirit," commanded Jesus, "leave him immediately and never enter him again."

The boy shrieked and turned white as a corpse. The people crowding around cried, "He is dead." But Jesus, unperturbed by their shouting, quietly lifted him to his feet and behold, he was perfectly well.

I shall never forget that night, when only the inner group gathered about Jesus. For the first time they really knew who Jesus was, even Simon the Zealot. Only Judas seemed confused and unable or unwilling to understand. When I mentioned this to Nathanael he said, "As a matter of fact we are all confused and find it hard to understand." Matthew became the spokesman for the rest:

"According to the traditions of our people," he began, "the Messiah is not to be of this world but will come in the air, on the wings of the wind, to take control of the world and judge the world. And you have come in the figure of a man!"

"Just for the present," said Jesus, "but not for long. The moment the Pharisees and other leaders of Jerusalem hear that any of you are making this claim for me, they will put me to death. After my bodily appearance leaves this earth, then wilt the Son of Man come in the unseen realm of the Spirit."

"God forbid, Lord!" cried Peter. "This must not be. You shall not be killed by anyone."

Get behind me," replied Jesus. "This morning you were a channel for the Father to speak through you. Tonight you are a channel for the thoughts of Satan. This morning you were an aid; tonight you are a hindrance to me. Your outlook is not God's, but man's."

"But Master!" Peter's voice rose in remonstrance.

"No, Peter, this is not something that can be debated. This is a law that cannot be changed. It is only fair to reveal to you exactly what this entails. If anyone wishes to follow me, let him deny himself, take up his cross day after day, and so follow me; for whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake and the Kingdom's will save it. What profit is it for a man to gain the whole world and to forfeit his soul? What could a man offer as an equivalent for his soul?"

CHAPTER 23: THE DISCIPLES ASK A QUESTION

WHEN WE reached the edge of Capernaum on our return, we saw smoke rising from the smoldering embers of a house that had burned almost completely to the ground. Judas and Simon the Zealot had preceded us and were talking with the owner who was evidently beseeching them for help. Judas as usual was carrying the purse, which he had now opened and was taking out some coins and counting them carefully; then, shaking his head, he whispered in the ear of Simon.

"Why do you whisper?" asked Jesus as he came up. "Do you not know that that which is whispered in the ear will be sounded from the housetop? Cannot we afford to contribute thirty pieces of silver to a man whose home is destroyed?"

Then, as neither spoke, he said, "You will someday be willing to see thirty pieces of silver given that a temple may be destroyed."

"What do you mean?" asked Simon.

Jesus said nothing more, but looked straight ahead with that faraway expression which sometimes came into his eyes when the crowd pressed closest upon him.

Judas also did not speak, but a shiver passed over his frame as if a window had been opened to a wind that comes sweeping down from the north laden with frost and snow. But if he knew whence came the wind, or what it would do before it returned, he showed it not.

I did not look long at the pinched faces of these two disciples. My eye went on to Jesus. After giving the silver to the unfortunate man with a word of love and good cheer, Jesus, with Judas on his left and Simon on his right, continued into the city. I kept pace. In spite of the uneasiness about Judas, a peace, a vast peace, a perfect peace, came welling up within my soul. Jesus' very nearness made the meager landscape seem complete and every object important; the straight road leading to Capernaum swept open like a bed of roses blown upon by the sweet zephyrs from the south—because he trod it.

At the fountain in the city we were met by Peter, James and John, who came rushing forward and embraced their leader. James, the spokesman for the three, cried, "The scribes and Pharisees are plotting against your life, beloved Master."

"What do I care?" he replied. "They can not hurt me. My time is not yet come. But when my time does come, then nothing on sea or land can stop their work, which is decreed."

"What is that work?" stammered Peter, aghast.

"None knows," said Jesus, "save only one and that one is the Son of Man."

"Then tell us!" pleaded Simon the Zealot. "For if we knew we could arm ourselves and cut the throats of those who would stop you. For all Israel cries out after you."

"They cry out after me but not after Him who sent me," said Jesus softly. "They are like broken reeds, torn from the roots, and ignore the fact that wholeness is necessary. They are interested in only part of me. They seek me for satisfaction of the body—not for satisfaction of the spirit. They welcome me as one anointed of men, not of God. Therefore, like broken reeds they will be weak protectors of men, because they seek only a man. They see only a man in me and value the outer kingdom a man could produce. No one can reach higher than the ceiling of his desire."

"Can we ever see the kingdom that is within?" asked Peter.

"You will, someday—and *he*, James, will, and *he*, Simon Zealot, and most of all will *this one*,"

and he pointed to John.

"And I?" cried Judas, and there seemed to be real anguish in his voice.

"Not in this life," replied Jesus.

"And when shall I leave this life?"

"Even before I taste death the thread of your life shall end."

"And when will that be?" asked Judas.

"You know that better than I"

A pall fell upon the group. Then John spoke.

"Why talk you of death, Master? You who came to bring us life—you shall not die—you shall never die."

"I shall taste death," said Jesus, and I noted that he did not say that he should die. "I shall taste it and rise above it, even as I *tasted* human love and rose above it, as I *tasted* covetousness and rose above it, as I *tasted* vanity and rose above it. I have never said that I should die. I have said I shall be lifted up and that Roman hands shall tear this temple down. But it shall rise again—after three days I shall re-erect the temple from where it fell. Life shall triumph over death."

"You have truly said, Master," began James, "that life shall triumph over death, but it is not in this world. In this world death is victor over all at the last."

"Death is never victor," said Jesus. "Only the Kingdom of heaven is victor—both here and there. And the door to that kingdom is not necessarily the door of death. For those who understand, I can be the door." He lifted his eyes toward the sky, and as he did so a radiance came over him till all the air about him seemed vibrating with love. "The heaven that is above," he said softly, "is also all about us right now if we had eyes to see, in the without and also in the within. But because your ears have waxed gross and your eyes have grown dull you cannot see the kingdom outside you. So I beseech you to be still and catch a glimpse of the heaven within you. To see one heaven is to see both, for that which is within is also that which is without, and that which is without is also that which is within, even as the mountain in the reflection of the lake is the same mountain that lifts its head into the sky."

"But how can we learn to see it?" asked James. "How can we see the mountain above and below at the same time?"

Jesus turned to them as a father about to gather his children into his arms and bless them.

"Come unto me my sons, you that now labor and are heavy laden, and I shall give you the experience of peace that will enable you to feel the kingdom that is without and also within. Come unto me and follow me and be receptive and I shall make you like the lilies of the field which toil not, neither do they spin, and yet in every drop of dew they receive the full bounty of the Father. Come unto me and trust me and you shall know that underneath every sparrow that falls is the hand of the Father even as in every sunrise and every sunset and in every changing of the sowing and the harvest time is the will of the Father. Come unto me and look at me and you will see the Kingdom of Heaven moving through the world in the without, even as in Your own heart you can see it moving within you. Look up or down or out or in, and you will see the footprints of the Father. For He is everywhere, whithersoever you go."

CHAPTER 24: WHO IS THE GREATEST?

TO REACH JESUS at the time when he was busiest, people more and more frequently sought out the sons of Zebedee and the sons of Jonas. In the beginning they had most often approached Jesus through Judas, naturally thinking Judas was the manager of the group because he carried the bag. The rich young ruler went to him as did Nicodemus and Simon the Pharisee. Those who had wealth and pride were naturally led to Judas because he looked the part of a leader. He bore himself like a Roman God, tall, erect, aristocratic-looking, haughty in manner, with at times a quiet dignity that made all notice him in a crowd. In some ways I think he was the most intellectual of the Twelve—the most learned, but in spiritual things certainly not the most wise. He gave the impression of wisdom, however, and of great reserve power, because he knew how to keep his silence. He was, nevertheless, a creature of moods and of late there were times when he appeared utterly depleted. Of late he had been dropping his mask of reserve, and what was being revealed was causing us all some concern.

One day I asked Philip how Judas ever came to hold so important a place with the Twelve, and he explained, "He is without question the most efficient businessman among us. Everything he touched used to turn to money. In Kerioth of Judea, where he began his work, he was so successful that a group of traders in Capernaum induced him to move to Galilee. When Jesus called him he

naturally gravitated to the highest position of the Twelve. Since the Jews have been a subject race for centuries, the only fields of leadership open to us are those of religion, commerce and trade. Jesus is our religious leader, Judas our financial leader, and in some groups the office of financial leader becomes even more important than the other."

"But that is only when the religious leader's ministry is a mere cloak to amass gains, isn't that so?"

"Yes, usually. But that can never be in our band, because we don't amass gains. Jesus sees to that. Between his custom of giving to anyone in need and his refusal to let us beg for greater gifts, he keeps the bag pretty nearly empty."

"Does Judas like that policy?"

"You don't need to ask that question," he said with a knowing smile. "And yet one can't entirely blame Judas. He is a man with a gift and not allowed to use it. There is frustration there, you might call it. Another frustration arises from the way people seeking Jesus are turning more to John and James, Peter and Andrew, than to him. They do this because these four are the only ones who really understand Jesus now. They can explain things in ways the rest of us cannot. For those who seek the Master, to go first to them is like passing through a net that screens out some of the obstructions before they reach him. Of course Judas doesn't like that and he especially resents the favoritism Jesus sometimes expresses toward John."

I watched John closely after that. I could see that he was not a perfect saint himself. The growing amount of attention the crowd was giving him and his brother was stirring his ego just a little more than it should. James also wore that complacent look of one satisfied with his role in life.

Finally one day the unrest among them broke into open, angry dispute. It was revealed that two distinct factions existed. All agreed that Peter whom Jesus had ordained as his "church" should be second in command, but beyond that no choice could be settled upon. Fishermen and husbandmen in

the group wanted John and James to come next; others preferred Matthew and Thomas. To increase the difficulty James and John were now actively pressing their claims to prominence and most of the rest resented their attitude of superiority.

Here were twelve men with a common mission and not the least bit of organization to tie them together. The nearest thing to it was their tacit acceptance of Judas as treasurer. The next nearest thing was Jesus' "Prayer Cabinet" of Peter, James and John. The one force that united them was loyalty and devotion to their leader, and I had just witnessed the strain upon it of individual ambitions. Should the cement of their love for Jesus give way at any point, the entire group might fall asunder.

Of course, of all this Jesus was quite aware. One afternoon he drew us apart to a little hillside where only sheep were accustomed to wander, and this is what he said.

"You have been asking many things of late, but in this asking you are following the barley-meal hungers of the crowd and the leaven of the Pharisees. For it is not this thing and that thing that I have to give—it is myself. It is not the goods you seek and the food you desire but the Kingdom which is within. See yourselves as a part of the vine and all that the vine has is yours. You will not then need to ask for leaves and roots, for the leaves of the vine and the roots of the vine will be yours. You will not need to ask for wages if you are sons of your Father. All that your Father has is yours, and all that is yours is His.

"Enter into me, deeply into me, and be then a branch of the vine. Drink the cup that I hold out to you, for that cup holds myself. Eat the bread I break for you, for that bread is myself. Take, eat the bread and drink the vine, and know that you are assimilating me unto yourselves. You and I are one. The Father and I are one. If you abide in me and I in you, then truly are we all one in the Father, and nothing can divide us."

The greatest craving of my life, next to my yearning for the love of Jesus, was to have the trust of all men. But as I listened to him, all sense of desire faded into insignificance, for I knew that as I drew Christ into myself I had the trust of all men, and nothing could take it from me. I could see on John's face the fading away of his desire to be first in the Kingdom. That moment my love went out toward him, and I knew that henceforth he *was* first in the Kingdom. In the face of James I could not quite discern whether love had mastered his desire entirely, for the desire seemed still struggling to express itself in outer frame or form, and then I knew he would be first in the *framework* of the church at Jerusalem, but not first in the hearts of men.

While I was engaged in these thoughts the sun went down and the stars came out and

gradually all the figures sitting there on the hillside in rapt and silent contemplation merged and melted into one picture, one being, one soul, one mind, one heart, one Person.

CHAPTER 25: A MEMORABLE HOUR WITH JESUS

THE NEXT MORNING I heard Jesus start forth before dawn and knew that he was on his way to the mountain to pray. His footsteps had vanished in the distance when, taking great care not to rouse the sleeping disciples, I rose and followed him.

In my land we would not call this a mountain but a high hill. On the crest I found Jesus seated on a rock looking off toward Jerusalem. I sat down on the grass at his feet. There was no hesitancy about speaking to him any more. Since I had found that my conversations with him were merely experiences of thinking aloud I knew my words were no more an interruption to his silence than my thoughts. And I had discovered that only evil words, just as evil thoughts and deeds, could be an intrusion to him.

And so I sat in his presence and thought aloud. And his thoughts spoke in answer to mine.

"Jesus of Nazareth, sinners whom you have forgiven love more and are more loved than those who have never sinned. Is that so?"

"There is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents than over the other ninety-nine that are whole."

"Might this tempt some weak ones, Master, to go forth and sin and return and repent?"

"All have already sinned enough," he replied. "Why need anyone seek to sin more?"

"Wherein have all sinned?"

"Every time you sit down to a full meal without thought, word, prayer or act toward blessing those who are without food, you are a partner in sin. Every day that you accept comfortable living without making protest or offering prayers regarding an economic order that begets tyrants, criminals and wars, you are a co-creator of those criminals and those wars. Every time you hold prejudice or contempt toward any race or class or nation, you are planting seeds of death and decay. Every time you harbor anger and resentment in your heart toward any living creature you are pouring into the pure air about you poison that helps to create murderers. Every

time you look with lust upon a woman you are adding to the danger of a less-controlled one's committing folly. Therefore I say unto you, do not go forth seeking to commit a crime whereof to repent, but rather repent first of the crimes in which you are an unconscious and unwitting partner. Take the vast crime of indifference and inertia and selfish complacency of the entire world upon your own shoulders and kneel here at my feet and repent for all. Behold, I who have committed no sin will love you for sharing the sins of all and lifting the sins of all.

With joy I knelt at his feet and with joy I felt him lift the burdens from my shoulders. After I resumed my sitting position he lapsed into a long silence. Then one by one he dropped golden thoughts into the air that I stored in the treasury of my heart.

"Lay aside all longings, yearnings, struggles and strife, my beloved."

I could not tell whether he was saying this with his voice or with his soul.

"Search no longer. I am here. I am the only perfect Answer to all your seeking."

There was another long silence. Such all-encompassing Love and Peace emanated from Jesus in these silent times that I welcomed them almost as much as I welcomed his words. It was privilege enough merely to be sitting at his feet.

"The Father and I are one. Abide in me and let me abide in you and you shall know through experience that I am in the Father, you are in me, and I am in you."

Another silence. More wonderful still was that silence!

"Stop thinking and believing that you are one and that I am another, that you are separate from me, for I am the only Real of you."

How tremendously true that affirmation had become to me!

"Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in the Father, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I went, two thousand years ago, to prepare a place for you. And into that union where I went you may go also. Abide in that place and you shall remain eternally one with me and with the Father."

"Father in Heaven," I whispered in my heart, "let me always be aware of that oneness."

"Abide in me and I in you," went on the pervading voice. "As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, so neither can you except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are one of the branches. He that abides in me and I in him, the same will bear much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing.

"My beloved," he was speaking very softly now, "most of those who heard me two thousand years ago could not accept this. They heard with their ears, but their understanding was blocked. They heard not with their hearts because their hearts had been hardened."

"O Jesus," I cried, "let that realization become mine as you seem to yearn to make it mine. Or did you yearn?"

"Did I yearn! Did I not say to my companions, 'O faithless generation, O you of little faith, how long must I be with you, how long must I bear with you'? Did I not say to my city, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I would have gathered you into oneness with me even as a mother hen gathers her chicks and you would not!' And if I yearned then, do I not yearn now for you? I yearn with all my love, with all my life. My love is ever about you. You need only to be aware of that love."

"And when I attain that awareness—?"

"'And when I attain!' You have already attained! The time has come when you should cease to search and start to expand."

"But how—"

"Cease your seeking, cease your striving, cease your struggling. The Spirit of Truth I sent into the world is I myself in action. Simply rest in that Truth. I bring to you as revelation what you cannot get by speculation. I give unto you All-Truth, and the greatest of all Truth as well as the simplest is that you and I and the Father are one."

An overwhelming sense of helplessness came upon me. Suppose I couldn't grasp this! Suppose I could not wholly realize it! Then again the voice of Jesus:

"Be still and know that I am God."

"And who—?" I was on the point of asking who would be the 'I.' But I remembered that I was to cease my asking, cease my seeking; I was to be still and *know*. Know what? That I—no matter how small and insignificant—am an expression of God.

As I got still and ceased asking, it seemed that I was being stretched out. Out and out and up and up until I filled the universe even as God fills the universe. I filled all space. Then I *knew* the Father and I were one. I kept on expanding until I filled all Time—yes, all Eternity. Then I knew that the Holy Spirit and I were one. Then all the Space that I was and all the Time that I was swirled into beautiful rhythms and the rhythms took form and dwelt with me—and then in a

moment of infinite bliss I knew that Jesus and I were also one. And then all Time and Space and Rhythm and Form focused into the tiniest speck, and that speck was I. Such littleness did not disturb me now. Instead my very littleness made the power appear all the greater.

Jesus seemed to sense how poor in thoughts of self I had become. So little I felt that he could not see me. "Good," he said quietly, "for the Kingdom is like a grain of mustard seed which expands and expands and—"

I was expanding again and peace and joy were filling everything. All Space was mine; all Time was mine now. God the Father was mine, God the Son was mine, God the Holy Spirit was mine. But greatest bliss of all was the knowing that I was totally *theirs*.

Jesus arose and left me. But even when he left I was still with him.

As the days went by, often for long periods I held the perfect realization that I and the Father were one. At such times I *knew* that this was the highest experience anyone could attain. Oh, how wonderful to know that perfect union which made everything else perfect, whole, one! But always somewhere I would lose my grasp, something would slip, and the vast wideness, broadness, depth and height would cease to expand. A condensing, shrinking movement would begin as though my thoughts were not braced firmly enough to hold the high realization. And then I shriveled into near nothingness. But whenever this happened all I needed to do was to go with all this awareness of my helplessness and sit again by the blessed Jesus, and immediately the expansion would begin once more.

"Can this be natural," I asked Jesus one day, "like the in-breathing and out-breathing of the lungs?"

"At this stage of your development it is," he replied. "But why stay in that stage?"

That started me to wonder. Would it be possible to be expanding *always*, eternally, forever? Going on into greater, greater, greater revelations of Truth, going deeper and deeper and deeper into Love, going higher and higher and higher into Bliss?

"But that would be Heaven!" I exclaimed.

"Need there be any greater Heaven than that?" the voice beside me said. "The purpose of my coming is that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full. I want you to live in Heaven now."

From that time forward it seemed as if all there was of me and ever had been, and ever would

be was flowing forth to meet and mingle with that which was Jesus.

CHAPTER 26: A LITTLE HOME IN BETHANY

THERE is a saturation point even in spiritual things. A drinking glass can become so full that it will not hold another drop.

I awoke one morning to find myself in that state. After a journey which brought so many mountaintop experiences, I felt that one more such experience and I would faint by the roadside.

"I feel that I should go apart awhile," I said to Jesus, "in order to digest what I have been receiving. I am under an urge to go back to the mountains from which we just came, and yet that alone would not satisfy my need. I also feel the need for the gentle touch of human sympathy and understanding. Can you help me resolve this paradox?"

The whole room was filled with the glory of Jesus' smile.

"My brother, you can find high mountain vistas in human hearts. You can find vast quiet spaces in human souls. When I want sanctuary from the fever of the world's activities, I have sometimes gone to the mountain, sometimes into the desert, and sometimes to a little home in Bethany. I advise you to go to Bethany."

"Would I not be intruding?"

"You never intrude in a home of love and trust, if love and trust precede you on the way."

And so it happened that I found myself seated on a little bench in the garden of Mary and Martha in Bethany. I was sitting very, very still, capturing the beauty and the spirit of that far-off time into which I had been so suddenly plunged. I was weeding out all old emotions, old thoughts, old memories which had not yet been born—or had they?—in the age from whence I had come.

As one in a foreign land contemplates the great distance in Space separating him from his home—perhaps an ocean, a mountain range or two thousand miles of desert—so I contemplated the two thousand years that separated me from my own Time, from my own associates, from what I proudly called my life work. Then suddenly I realized that this experience had provided an opportunity to attain that inner oneness with God far more easily than in my own time. For I had no possessions to let go. As I looked over the fields and hills of Galilee, at the towns and cities, I could see nothing that I

owned and nothing that I desired to own, for it was not my Time nor my Age.

I also had no fame and no position in life to guard. I knew for once the delight of anonymity. I felt it would be an absolute impertinence to put my name into anyone's ear. No one had even asked me my name! I never realized before what a wonderful privilege anonymity could be. And besides, I had no addictions. I could not smoke; no one did. I could not taste the wine, and did not care for it if I could. Sex had no pull upon me.

Then it occurred to me, why could I not return to my own time, my own age, my own little nook in life with all pretensions, all possessiveness and all addictions screened out? Why could I not retain this perfect anonymity, this perfect possessionlessness, this perfect freedom from consuming habits of all kinds? What joy and freedom I then could have! Why let the accident of my being born into the twentieth century burden me with *things* to own, with *vanities* to protect, with *habits* to cleave to? Could I not let this passage through Time serve as a sieve to strain out these mundane things. But what would my former associates say? How would my cronies of the Era in which I lived accept all my abstinences? Suppose I told them that I had "returned" from another Age, that I belonged to another world, and keep my blessed adherence to God? Would they think me queer? "Let them!" I exclaimed. What harm could come of it? What did people think of Lazarus after he had returned from the grave?

And so I rejoiced and became very, very still, and immediately felt the radiant presence of the Father.

I was aware that I was trying to reread events through the ether of a far-distant time. I wondered how much of this was coming to me as through a glass darkly, and how much of it I was witnessing face to face. As an oar seems to be bent at a more oblique angle beneath the water than above, and as smoke following a train assumes different shapes a short time after it is first seen, I wondered how much the events and words I was here witnessing and hearing were juggled, shadowed and reshaped after the space of these two thousand years.

I remembered how, after awakening from a dream that I wanted to recapture, I must recall it quickly or else like the dew on the grass at dawn, it would evaporate and the dream be lost. I was quite aware that there would be some loss, some rearrangement of the patterns, but this, too, I knew: that when I held fast the vision of Zebedee arranging his nets or when I recalled the endearing voice of John or the dynamic voice of Peter, and yes, when, seated among the Twelve, we all looked into the face of

Jesus, and turned our thoughts upon our Father in heaven, the real values of this experience would never be lost, for everything about it was perfectly and marvelously *true*. The smoke from the past event might fade and change its form somewhat because of the vast distance in Time separating the two Eras, but it was still the same smoke. I might not recall all the words of Jesus distinctly, and they might not be in the same form and the same order that have been handed down by the gospel writers of Galilee, but this I knew, it was the same voice, the same truth, and, though through my weak channel often crudely altered, they were at least the same word-concepts that Jesus spoke in those days.

I was not getting the dust nor feeling the rough places in the road as I know Jesus, the physical Jesus, must have felt them two thousand years ago. The odors of field and forest, of cooking food, of camels, asses and workingmen were not to me as they must have been to the disciples so long before. But I did catch sounds and I did see sights with an inner ear and an inner vision that screened out much of the raucousness and all the jar. And so with the highest of the five senses—sight and hearing—albeit in an inward, more than an outward way, I was catching something very beautiful and very precious of the life and words and activities of Jesus.

Filled with these thoughts I knelt down beside the bench and thanked God with all my heart for giving me this blessed privilege of being awhile with Jesus.

While I was still kneeling I heard soft footsteps beside me. Glancing up I saw Mary looking pensively at me. Without any sign or manner of surprise at my position she sat upon the bench and alter awhile I rose and sat down beside her.

"It is wonderful, the way all things take perfect form when Jesus is in this garden," she said quietly. "Long after he leaves, his spirit remains. He is so much one of us in our home that we can never lose him. I find that, as we share him he becomes more wholly ours. I wish that all the homes in Palestine loved him as we love him and belonged to him as we belong to him.

"There isn't a breath of ours that isn't his. Our hands, our feet are his. Lazarus is never so happy as when running errands for Jesus. Martha is in heaven when she has the opportunity to serve him. I could sit at his feet forever and forever and never get tired. The reason I tell you all this is because I often come to this bench and kneel, just as you have been kneeling, and feel his blessed presence as I know you must have been feeling it when I found you. Sometimes I open my eyes and expect to see him looking down at me. And he is here—in spirit. Whenever I get quiet and adore him he knows it, no matter if he be a hundred leagues away. Every time we think of Jesus we help him, he once told me.

And he is thinking of us and helping us—always."

CHAPTER 27: RAISED FROM THE DEAD

THE NEXT DAY Ruth, the cousin of Judas, arrived. I was half expecting this. I knew that her father, Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue of Capernaum would bring his entire family up to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover which was now just three days away. I knew that sometime or other Ruth would be coming out to visit Lazarus. And now she was here and I was the one to meet her. Mary and Martha had gone to the garden to gather berries. Lazarus was lounging in the sunlight under a fig tree near by. Ruth was overjoyed at finding me.

"You know why I have come!" she exclaimed.

"Yes," I replied. "You and Lazarus must have much in common—you two who were raised by the Master from the dead."

Lazarus, usually so silent and absent-minded, was all alert when he heard our voices. His eyes glowed with enthusiasm and he reached out both hands to take the hand of Ruth in his. For a long time each merely looked in silence into the eyes of the other. I was starting to leave when Ruth, without turning her head or dropping her eyes from those of Lazarus, said kindly, "Don't go."

How did I qualify for such a blessing? Was it possible that there was a mystic fellowship between these two whom life had already passed by and those to whom life had not yet come? Jesus could draw back these from the past; could he draw me forward from the future? At least I knew this much, that I, too, carried something non-dimensional, other-worldly about me. And then it burst upon me that each of us, you and I and everyone everywhere, are always carrying something of heaven with us. What we lack is only the awareness of this fact. Just as one is not conscious of the privileges of his native country until he has sojourned awhile in a foreign land, so we are not aware that heaven is all about us until we step away from our present life far enough to see it in its perspective as a mere way-station in a vast journey through Eternity.

So smug are we in our little mundane world that it requires a shock to awaken us to the fact that we are truly creatures of heaven. The shock of death itself is the greatest awakener, the greatest illuminator of all. No wonder Ruth and Lazarus had this consciousness in common. Now I could see

why Jesus kept reiterating that strange paradox, "He who loses his life shall save it." Yes, one must sometimes die in the flesh to live in the spirit, but dying was only half of it. "Unless you are *born again* you are in no wise worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven." It seemed that every day that I walked in Galilee, yes, every hour that I was in the presence of Christ, I was being born again. And Mary was right: one did not have to have the physical body of Jesus of Nazareth always at hand to be with him. As these thoughts flashed upon me, my soul cried out, "Lord, keep me always conscious of the loving presence of the Living Christ!"

The voice of Ruth was still ringing in my ears. "Don't go!" Thrilled at this invitation, I withdrew a few paces and seated myself on a bench near the fig tree. Presently Lazarus, not letting go of Ruth's hand, drew her to the bench and they sat down beside me.

"You know what I know, Ruth," was all he said. "I need speak no further." Then turning and laying a hand on mine, he closed his eyes and together we three sat in what I would call the greatest Quaker silence I had ever experienced.

All through that hour I felt the living presence of the Christ. I felt him as powerfully as I had ever experienced his bodily presence since I had been in Galilee. So all-encompassing was this embrace of heavenly Love that I could not have shaken it off if I had tried. I wondered if heaven could be merely sitting with two or three kindred souls in such deep realization of God's presence as this. I was submerged in Love. Not only did it wrap me round but it filled every cell and pore of my being. I found myself breathing Love, inhaling and exhaling Love. I felt Love throbbing through my veins and arteries. I felt it in the very core of my being.

Then into this great sea of Love in which I was resting and which was resting in me, I began to put one by one all the persons and things that I wanted to place there. I placed Jesus himself in the center and at once felt a veritable tidal wave of his Love and prayer for me, and then I knew that in blessing Christ he was in a far greater way blessing me. I put my loved ones into this great sea of Love and a vast flow of heavenly blessing swept in upon them. I put into his hands all the spiritual leaders that I knew. I finally turned over to him my enemies, those who had said any manner of evil against me, every one of them. Then all the dreams and desires of my life I put one by one into this sea of loving fulfillment. "This is the kind of prayer," I thought, "that I must take back to my Age, to my people."

When an hour had passed, Lazarus rose and walked to and fro with head thrown back

looking upward into the sky. Finally he began to speak as one who is merely thinking aloud:

"That heaven which I saw differs only from this earth in that everything is in order and the inner always controls the outer. The inner is so great, so wonderful so complete and so perfect, that no outer expression is even necessary, save for those weaker ones who must walk, as it were, with a cane or a crutch. My sister Mary is so close to Jesus that she didn't have to die to catch this secret of heaven. And you, little Ruth, came through the same experience that I did to live there too. When confronted with two choices you and Mary always choose the better part. Martha still walks with a cane. And your dear cousin, Ruth, your cousin that carries the bag for the Twelve, alas, he walks always with a *crutch*. Pray for him, Ruth, for he is far, far from the kingdom. And never farther than right now. He sees the outer so plainly that he is confused and blinded by it. Not only does he stay outside, but he helps to keep others outside also. He throws a shadow when he is near—a shadow that I recoil from. But oh, how hungry he is! Like the poor man gathering crumbs at the rich man's table, his eyes are always on the floor. It is only the crumbs of life that he sees. He fails to realize the feast spread out before him. To be so near the Nazarene and yet so far away, so rich and yet so starved! It is worse than a sailor's perishing from thirst on a raft upon a wide, wide sea.

"When Jesus had my friends remove the burial cloth that day, there unrolled from me the bonds of the outer which had held me a living corpse for thirty years. For the first time I was truly alive! For the first time I saw first things first, O my friend," and he turned to me, "when you return to your native land, remember to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness and after that all other things will truly be added unto you."

CHAPTER 28: BORN AGAIN

EARLY THE NEXT DAY Nathanael joined us. I felt a real affection for Nathanael with his long arms and large hands—a great rangy man, probably reared near vineyards or fields. I could not forget the rhythmical way he had rowed the boat and the long sweep of the oars when we went across to Genesaret. There was something about him that was calming and quieting. He had a homely philosophy of the soil about him, and somehow I felt deep inside me that he was getting the message of Jesus better than most of the disciples. But he was so guileless, so simple and direct, he would never

have the gift of organizing it and making his name known. He would never write a gospel, or if he did, he would not put his name to it, and it would go under some other's name, or never be included in the Bible when the Bible was made up in later years.

I was pondering the mystery of this man Nathanael, and it finally came to me that he was one of the invisible carriers of the Word, part of the precious leaven that was to make the entire world Christian some day.

We all stood around him anxious to hear the latest news.

"The crowds gathering for the Passover received Jesus into Jerusalem," he said. "It was as glorious a reception as a nation might give a leader about to cast off the Roman yoke. But I am afraid he is disappointing them by the quiet way he is going about the Father's business. It has been a very trying week also because the Pharisees and the Sadducees are making use of every opportunity to engage him in controversy. But more potent than any weapon they are using is his refusal to lead the revolt the people want to start against Rome. After their glorious reception, for him not to show his appreciation by accepting this leadership is like a slap in the face to them. It leaves the populace ready to believe any slander the religious leaders may devise against him. It almost makes me tremble.

"Jesus wishes to step out of this confusion for awhile. For that reason he would like to come out here all alone tomorrow to spend the day in rest and quietness with Martha and Mary and Lazarus. That is what has brought me here."

"The Master is always welcome!" said Martha, while joy lighted the faces of Mary and Lazarus.

While Martha prepared lunch, Nathanael drew me aside saying, "Let us walk in the garden."

He was silent for awhile, then, turned to me suddenly and said, "Let me speak of that fear that is gnawing at my heart. When Jesus sent us out, did you notice that it was two by two? My partner was Philip, but Judas' partner was Simon the Zealot. The Zealots are convinced that if all of Palestine rose in revolt under a real statesman they could throw off the yoke of Rome, and both Simon and Judas are sure that Jesus is that statesman. With what they consider his power of magic they are convinced Jesus could set Israel free."

"Do you share that belief?" I asked.

"That Jesus is a statesman, yes. That he would ever consent to invoke his power for a political cause, no. A revolt, he says, would end with Rome's reducing every city to ashes, selling all survivors into slavery and inviting the Arabs in to take over the country."

"Oh, how true!" I exclaimed. "What wonderful insight!"

"You speak as one who knows," he smiled. "Do you know anything about Rome?"

"I know this much," and I spoke with vigorous emphasis. "Rome will not last forever. If Israel will only wait a few hundred years freedom will fall into her lap like a ripe plum. If Israel will only follow the example of Gaul and Germania, now under Caesar's yoke, she will become a great world power as they will."

"Gaul and Germania?" he asked. "Are they the lands in the far north we occasionally hear about where wild giants roast entire oxen on a spit?"

"A great people," I replied, "and they will remain great because they will bide their time. Oh, that Israel would only be as wise!"

"Yes, " said Nathanael, "Jesus is a true statesman. His refusal again and again to accept the kingship and lead this revolt, his insistence that the meek shall inherit the earth, his constant faith that love is the most powerful force in the universe, all add up to one thing: the sure way, the only way that Israel will keep this promised land which Moses and Joshua bestowed upon us will depend upon our being meek enough and nonresistant enough."

"Does Simon the Zealot still think that the revolt is what Jesus should lead?" I asked.

"He is beginning to change his mind, but not Judas. Judas insists that with the buildup Jesus has had, and the popularity he has achieved and with his power over the elements, that he *must* do it. What is more, Judas contends it is now or never. After the people from all over Palestine gave Jesus that great ovation when he entered Jerusalem, if he does not rise to their expectations the mob will turn against him as an impostor. If the mob joins with the Pharisees against Jesus a great calamity may occur. This is the fear that is gnawing at my heart."

"You think the people are that eager to revolt?" I asked.

"Yes, and they want a magician to lead them, and Jesus refuses to be that magician."

"Then I know he is a statesman!" I declared. "If all the leaders of nations would take him as their model what a wonderful world this would be!"

After lunch Nathanael and I said farewell to our host and hostesses and started up the road leading to Jerusalem.

"I have been noticing your interest in the people that Jesus has raised from the dead," began Nathanael as we left Bethany behind us. "I see you lingering around them whenever one of them joins

our group. I see you straining to hear every bit of their conversation. And I noticed your close attention to Lazarus and Ruth when I first arrived. May I ask you, were you ever raised from the dead?"

"Oh, no," I hastened to explain, "I never had that experience. But it is true that I am tremendously interested in catching the views of people who have looked into heaven. That is natural to anyone, is it not?"

"Perfectly natural, but I sense in an inner way, if I do not seem intruding to say this to you, that your interest in this runs deep—deeper than you are letting us know. I had a feeling that you, too, in the land from whence you may have come, have had the experience of returning to life after tasting death."

"My interest does spring from something deep," I said thoughtfully, for his question had commenced to bring out in me an answer, just as all sincere questions have a way of drawing response from one's deeper level of thought. "But it is very hard to explain it as I have scarcely been aware of it myself until you spoke just now. If you will bear with me while I try to think out loud I shall see what the answer is. For I am just as curious about it as you are."

He smiled. "I understand," he said quietly, in that profoundly convincing way of his. "I understand."

"Unless one dies and comes back to life he really does not know what life is," I began. "I am not interested nearly so much in the literal death as I am in the symbolical death, where one dies to the outer world and is born to the real world that God has made, but which most of us are too blind to see. Perhaps I have passed through that miracle, or perhaps I am passing through it now. In a very meager way I think I experience it every day. All of you disciples have done it, or will do it, or you are not true disciples of your Lord. Jesus says to you so often that he who loses his life shall save it and he who saves his life shall lose it."

"An eminent scholar named Nicodemus," interposed Nathanael, "came to Jesus by night once and asked questions concerning the kingdom Jesus talked so much about, and the Master told him that unless one is born again he is not able to enter this realm of bliss and peace."

"Tell me about Nicodemus!" I urged, for I wanted to get any light on that famous conversation that I could. "What did he say?"

"Nicodemus went into detail with Jesus about the way people are born into such a world, asking if they must return into their mother's wombs and go through all the pangs of childbirth. To

this Jesus replied that they often have to go through far greater pangs; that just as a baby is born weeping if he will live, so people are born into this new realm of consciousness mourning and poor in spirit, humble and helpless. And he went on to tell how it is possible for one, when he is reborn meek enough, to inherit the earth. Now Nicodemus could never understand how the meek could inherit the earth! There followed a long discussion, so long and erudite that the disciples sitting near went to their beds and neither those who were present nor those who heard Jesus report it, have ever bothered to write it down."

"Did they record any of it?" I asked eagerly, for here I might be learning some real secrets of the gospel.

"Not on papyrus but on their hearts, yes. They will never forget that which was said in those terms they can understand. You have no idea how long is the memory of a true Israelite, trained to remember things from his mother's knee."

"What is your conception of what Jesus meant by being born again?" I asked.

"I would say that it is very much to the inner soul what Lazarus' experience was to the body. Jesus said about the little daughter of Jairus, 'She is not dead, she is sleeping. Maid, awake.' I think that is exactly what we are doing in this world; we are all sleeping. Our Master has come to say to us, 'Friends, awake.' Yes, the time has come for us all to awake to this larger kingdom which is round about us and in which we live and move and have our being. But no one will ever find it or live there until he has died unto himself and risen, according to the words of Jesus."

"O Nathanael," I cried, "please pray that I shall always awake to that larger kingdom and that I shall never, never slip back into that old materialism in which I have been sleeping in the years of the past—I mean, in the years of the future."

He smiled. "You are the only one who seems always to get the past and the future mixed."

"After all," I replied, "it takes the silver threads of the future along with the golden strands of the past to produce the pattern of the infinite."

"You are right, friend," he replied. "No one can live long in the presence of the Master without finding himself walking down the highroad of Eternity."

CHAPTER 29: THE UPPER ROOM

RETURNING FROM HIS REST at Bethany at noon of the day of the Passover, Jesus met his twelve disciples just outside the gate that faces upon the Mount of Olives. Mary, Martha and Lazarus were accompanying him, desiring, as were thousands of other pilgrims, to celebrate the famous feast at Jerusalem.

"Because of the crowds," I overheard Andrew telling Jesus, "it is going to be very difficult to find a house big enough to hold all those who would like to sit down with you for the Passover."

Then I looked around and saw that the Twelve had been augmented by half a dozen close friends of the disciples, ardent followers of the Christ.

"The Father will provide," said Jesus. "A humble home will receive us. The test of that home will be revealed at the well where women usually carry the water jars. A manservant must indeed be humble if he is willing to do a woman's work. Peter and John, go into the city and the first man you meet humble enough to carry a water jar, follow him, and whatever house he goes into, tell the owner that the Teacher says, 'My time is near. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.' He will then show you a large room upstairs with couches spread, all ready. Prepare the Passover for us there."

When they had left, Cleopas, who was in the group, went up to Jesus.

"Some of us came to Jerusalem especially to see you. May we share the Passover feast tonight with you and your disciples?"

"Tonight," replied Jesus, "the Twelve and I are to sup alone. But if you will accompany us I am sure there will be an extra room where those that are with you may celebrate the feast at the same time."

Peter and John returned to lead us to the home of a couple named Joab and Mary. They did have an extra room, and therein lies a story. It seems that Joab was the paralytic who had lain for years by the pool of Siloam, always too slow to reach the waters in time for healing. During the long years when all the support of the family had fallen upon Mary, she had taken over a rambling house where she was able to offer the cheapest kind of lodgings to people coming to Jerusalem. The first floor was adequate to house the family. The second floor was divided into two large rooms, each filled with a dozen or more low frame supports for mattresses which were used at night by transients. Thanks to the

custom adopted from the Romans of reclining on couches while eating, it was very easy to convert these sleeping rooms into rooms for dining on such important occasions as the Passover.

Mary, who had gladly set aside one of them for Jesus and his Twelve, now, to our joy, was willing to have the second used to accommodate the nine extra followers who had come with Jesus and his disciples to her home.

Some of these "extras" I had met before; some were new to me. There were Mary, Martha and Lazarus, and a young scholarly physician, Dr. Luke, whom I did not know; a young man with bright, eyes and charming manner whom they called Stephen and two men who said frankly they were in training to become disciples of Jesus the moment he was ready to enlarge his band—Mathias and Barsabas, surnamed Justus. Finally Cleopas and I completed the list.

Now you and millions of others have already been in that house! Indeed, most of you have actually—in imagination—sat in the very upper room where the Twelve sat that night with *him*. you who understand the hunger to be close to the Master in the Last Supper can enter the portal with me and share indeed what is about to happen.

When we were shown upstairs, I glanced into that blessed room where the Twelve were assembling. I saw the long table already set and ready for thirteen guests. I saw Jesus take his place with John at his right hand. I saw Judas and Peter also placing themselves at the right of the Master. Then the door was closed and I turned back to the room where I was to sup that night.

When we were settled on our couches, Joab and his wife, Mary, and their adolescent son, Mark, joined us, making twelve in all.

"I prepared both rooms," explained the good wife, "so that the Master could take his choice of the two. For that reason there are thirteen places in each.

"That is very appropriate for the Passover night," said Dr. Luke. "These twelve places we occupy can represent the twelve tribes of Israel and the vacant place can represent our Unseen Host, Jehovah, the God of Israel. It is very fitting that we should sup with Him on this night of the Passover."

"Glorious!" exclaimed the young Stephen. How my heart went out to these two men, Stephen and Luke, so suddenly thrust into my acquaintance.

"Let us address to Jehovah our gratitude for bringing us together this fateful night," said Matthias and he proceeded to offer a prayer.

Rarely in reality, or *in that deeper reality which is realization itself*, have I ever experienced what I

experienced that night. I shall never forget how the manservant—the same one that met the disciples at the well—came up the stairs with basin and water jug and towels and passed into the other room to wash the feet of the thirteen wayfaring men within, and how he presently reappeared, his mouth agape, and whispered to Joab so all could hear: "The Master himself insists upon doing that which only a servant is accustomed to do."

But hardly had he left before we heard the loud explosive voice of Peter cry out, "Oh, not my feet only, beloved Master, hut also my hands and my head!"

Then the manservant brought up the great hot dish, first for those in the inner room and then one for us, and the meal really began.

As the evening progressed, my yearning ear strained to catch another voice through the thin partition, but all I heard was the dull monotone of many voices. How I envied the bondservant who went through the door from time to time bringing forth the basin and towels and carrying in unleavened bread and unfermented wine.

As we talked around our table and Stephen told of a brilliant classmate of his, a fellow student of his who also studied under Gamaliel, a young man named Saul of Tarsus, who could not agree with him regarding the revolutionary teaching of the Nazarene, suddenly the door flung open and a tall, dark figure came out, wrapping the folds of his mantle around his face as if to conceal it as he hurried past us and down the stairway.

And now all twelve of us became frozen in our places and we gazed into each other's eyes as if trying to read the portent of things to come. But even as we sat and stared, and even as the footsteps of the fleeing one outside faded away, we found ourselves relaxing into quiet, listening, as a voice sweeter than silence came wafted to us through the door which Judas in his haste had left partly ajar.

"Let not your hearts be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And where I shall be, there you may be also.

"The words that I speak, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwells in me, He speaks the words. And when He speaks words they immediately turn into works. He that believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto the Father. And because I shall then be in the very midst of the Father and the Father in me, whatsoever you shall then ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

"What a wonderful promise that is!" I thought. "And how little do we avail ourselves of it!" But

even while I was musing upon this the voice repeated it again:

"If you shall ask *anything* in my name, I will do it. Hitherto you have asked nothing in my name; ask now and you shall receive, that your joy be full."

Then one after another came these precious pearls of wisdom and illumination that I shall hold in my heart always.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can you except you abide in me. A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.

"When a woman is in labor she is sorry, for her time has come; but when the child is born she remembers her anguish no longer, for joy that a human being has been born into the world."

"Can it be," I thought, "that the passage from this world to the next is nothing but a birth process even as the coming from the other world to this brings a newborn babe?"

"And so with you," continued that rich, invading voice. "Your heart is full of sorrow now at what I have told you. Yet—I am telling you the truth—my going is for your good. If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you, but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of Truth, shall come, he will guide you into all Truth. He will draw upon what is mine and disclose it to you. All that the Father has is mine; that is why I say, He will draw upon what is mine and disclose it to you.

"Behold the hour has come that you shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation. But be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!"

There was a pause. Then the voice was lifted in prayer:

"I pray for them that you have given me, Father, for they are mine. And all mine are thine, and I am glorified in them. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved

them as you have loved me; that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. Amen."

As the voice came through the partly opened door I pondered how through the centuries those words would filter through millions of partly opened human hearts, and I sent up a silent prayer for the hearts of all mankind to be thrown wide to receive with joy and understanding those words that someday were destined to heal the world.

And as I listened, I found myself led to turn toward the vacant chair which Luke had said was reserved for Jehovah. It appeared not vacant now but filled with a blinding radiance and as if by a loudspeaker from a later age, the voice from the other room seemed coming to us from this place of light.

Yes, the Comforter that Jesus was describing seemed already seated in our midst.

"Arise, let us go hence," and the figures, twelve now, not thirteen, walked past us slowly and went down the stairs together.

As the footsteps died away in the direction of the Mount of Olives, conversation at our table was resumed, but I heard nothing of it. My heart was possessed with such awareness of what was going to happen that everyone around the table became almost as transparent to me as an open book. For a few moments I transcended myself in a sort of fourth-dimensional experience. Young Stephen especially drew my attention. His whole frame seemed luminous as if the body of his inner thought had taken actual form and instead of being encompassed by, was encompassing, his physical body in its embrace.

At that moment one of the guests asked for more bread and as the plate for the unleavened loaves was empty, Stephen arose, took it to a large hamper and filled it. When the mother of Mark protested that the manservant should have been called, he replied,

"If the Master from Nazareth could wash the feet of his disciples, why should I shrink from becoming a waiter on tables? This is the very least I can do to emulate him."

And then I watched with awe the graceful movements of this Stephen whom I now knew was to become the greatest layman of his time—that time of the beginning of the new movement. When he resumed his seat beside me, Mark whispered in his ear loudly enough for me to hear,

"I think the manservant followed the others to the Hill of Olives." Then he added, "As soon as we are through eating, I intend to go there, too."

"I shall remain and look after things here," replied Stephen. "I shall continue now to serve in this way until the end."

—until the end!" I thought.

Our conversation was cut short by a heavy pounding on the outer door below. No manservant being there to open it, the intruders burst in and a score of tramping feet sounded on the stairs. We at the table sat transfixed with horror as dark figures bearing torches emerged at the top of the stairway.

Judas led them. He bore no torch, but the glow of blazing brands carried by others lighted his face in a ghastly way I had never seen a face lighted before. Even the blazing light could not lighten the dark places in it, and his face seemed filled with darkness, a vast, all-consuming darkness. That face and its consuming darkness will haunt me as long as I live.

Behind him were a band of men and officers from the chief priests.

"Where is the Nazarene," demanded a centurion when they found the inner room was empty. "Whither went he?" We made no reply.

"I know," said Judas roughly. "Follow me."

But as the soldiers and Pharisees turned and followed Judas down the stairs, one figure remained. His eyes were fixed upon the young man beside me.

"Stephen!" he cried. "You here? I would never have thought it of you."

"Saul!" exclaimed Stephen. "Saul of Tarsus! What brought you hither?"

"I am on the trail of the most pernicious influence that ever endangered Judaism. I shall not cease until either he or I am destroyed."

"O Saul," replied Stephen, "You will live to regret your mistake if you join those who would persecute that man! He is the Saviour of Israel. As Moses led Israel out of bondage, this one will lead the world out of bondage. His words shall—"

"His words shall perish on the desert air." Saul's voice was sharp and filled with hate and disdain, "The words of Moses were engraved upon tablets of stone and will live till the end of Time."

"Jesus' words are engraved upon the human heart," answered Stephen, "and will live through all Eternity."

"Be careful," Saul warned. "If you speak such heresy, the stones, the very stones that Moses' words are written upon, will fall upon you and destroy you, will rain upon you and crush you."

"Be careful, Saul of Tarsus," and Stephen spoke with courage that amazed me, "lest the words of Jesus burst upon your heart someday and destroy all that remains of the proud Saul."

These two young men continued to face each other for a few moments—a tableau that I shall never forget—and then Saul turned and hurried away to overtake the footsteps now vanishing in the distance. The steady tramp of their feet beat upon my aching heart as a dirge that accompanies the march of death.

Mark, apparently bursting with foreboding and curiosity, rose and drew the soft folds of his mantle about him and followed after Saul.

CHAPTER 30: A NIGHT OF DARKNESS

ALL THE TERRORS of the universe were let loose that night. I found myself wandering the streets of Jerusalem alone, knowing in my heart that the ones I looked for I should not find. How true were the words of Jesus, "You shall be scattered, every man to his own!" I knew at last how a lost sheep must feel.

Then suddenly right out of the night I came upon Simon Peter. I had never seen him so distraught. It was hard to believe that a man such as he could be so shaken. His hand was trembling as he laid it upon my arm. He kept wetting his lips in a vain effort to regain composure.

"All evil forces are unleashed tonight." His voice was tired and cracked. "They have taken the Master. Hate is in their hearts. They cannot be appeased. Something terrible is going to happen. I can feel it in the air."

Certainly there was psychic disturbance. I never felt a night so heavy with foreboding.

"And I—I failed him," there was a catch in his throat. "Yes, John and James and I all failed him. He took us with him into the garden to help him in prayer and all three fell asleep. 'Could not you watch with me just one hour?' the Master said. And when we awoke the officers were there with lanterns." Peter stifled a sob.

"And I did another awful thing, a foolhardy thing. They are on my trail now—I know they are on my trail. I resisted a Roman officer and the offense is death. There is no need served by death alone. Much value for the future is gained by living. Oh, I am quivering all over."

We entered the glow of a fire which some Passover guests, not able to find rooms in the overcrowded city, had lighted in the courtyard of a public building.

"Let us warm ourselves a moment," he said. The night air was cool and sharp. An uncanny chilliness was abroad.

"Yes, let us warm ourselves," I said, looking at Peter who was still trembling. We stepped into the circle of light and Peter at once stretched his hands out before the fire. The penetrating heat striking his body for a moment made him tremble more violently than before.

"Cold, friend?" asked an old man with a white beard.

"Yes," said Peter, his teeth chattering. "A chilly night!"

Suddenly a young woman joined the group, hardly more than a girl.

"You should be home in bed," remarked the old man. "Little do you know what is going on, grey-beard. I am a maidservant of the High Priest and we are a busy household tonight. I know secrets that will shake all Jerusalem tomorrow."

Peter's knees began to give way. "Very chilly night," he quavered.

The girl glanced up, then looked at him steadily and charged in mocking, bantering tones, "Aha! You were with Jesus of Nazareth, too!"

"I do not know anything." Peter was now trying desperately to control himself. "I have no idea what you mean."

Just then from a coop back of the inn nearby a cock crowed lustily. The maidservant turned to the ring of bystanders around the fire. "I insist that fellow is one of them."

Peter's voice became sharp, "I swear I do not know the man."

The maidservant was silent and all would have been well had not the old grey-beard said in a tone of deep conviction, "To be sure you are one of them. Certainly you are a Galilean, Why, your accent betrays you!"

Suddenly from around the turn in the road there emerged a troop of Pharisees and officers of the High Priest. Peter broke out cursing and swearing:

"I declare I do not know the man you mean!"

As the troop of soldiers went tramping by I saw a flash of the familiar garment all of one piece and woven from above! "Jesus of Nazareth!" I exclaimed.

At the words all those around the fire turned and stared as the man of Galilee passed. I caught

his eye, so deep in sorrow, resting upon Peter with the same look he must have had in Gethsemane.

"I lost Judas," the look said. "Now I lose you, too, Peter, Peter—my rock. Do I lose you, too?"

Suddenly from the kitchen coop back of the row of buildings the cock crowed again. In deep despair and remorse Peter's eyes met his Master's. He dropped his head in his hands and sobbed.

Presently he pulled at my garment and we stole away.

"And to think!" moaned Peter. "I wasn't being quizzed by officers or soldiers or Sanhedrin! Only a little girl meaning nothing. Why did I do it? Why did I do it? Please leave me. I want to go off and hide myself."

So I went away and left him staring at the lights in Pilate's windows.

All night long I wandered the streets of Jerusalem in agony. Knowing the triumph that was coming at the end of all this, when Jesus would rise from the tomb, it would have seemed that I could have faced that period of suffering as a temporary interruption in the stream of All-Good, as a woman who is in labor, as Jesus had put it, rejoices when a manchild is born. But what oppressed me like a weight that almost stopped my breathing was the scene I had just witnessed of Peter's denial—and back behind that, the picture of the sleeping and seemingly indifferent disciples in the garden of Gethsemane. To think that Jesus had to face all this "scattering" alone. And now there was a third agony—the way the disciples were so easily being drawn away from him at the words of accusation heard on every hand—the words of the Sanhedrin and the mob.

When morning came and people began to stir in the streets, I went seeking right and left, hoping to find someone in whom I could awaken concern for this poor forsaken One, who alone in this age, carried the love of God in his heart. If I were merely dreaming this, my dream was not a dream right now but a nightmare, for I was wandering that early dawn in a world of separate souls.

I stopped a milk vendor, coming in a cart drawn by goats.

"A good man is being crucified this day. Cannot we do something to prevent it?" I pleaded.

"What is that to me? Besides, they say he preferred the association of publicans and harlots to men such as me. He denounced my religious leaders and said that in three days he would destroy the capital temple. Please do not delay me."

I stopped a rough-faced, bearded man in working clothes. "He deserves to die!" he declared fiercely. "We offered to make him King if he would lead us against the Roman tyranny. And after the great buildup we gave him for over two years, ending in a triumphant march into Jerusalem, he double-

crosses us and turns us down. He tells us to be meek and lowly. Let him taste the fruits of his own meekness and lowliness today and see exactly where it gets him."

After that I ceased to look anywhere for help. I could see why Jesus kept silent when being grilled by Pilate. Everything, anything he said would be turned against him by Pilate or by the Pharisees or by someone in the crowd.

At last I met Philip and Thomas, and received the hardest blow of all.

Said Philip, "We begin to wonder, as John the Baptist wondered when he was in prison, whether this one is truly the Messiah or whether we should look for another."

I groaned.

"You see, all the good religious leaders think he was possessed of Beelzebub," said Thomas. Perhaps he is a fanatic and not the Son of God. Perhaps our devotion was a kind of hypnotism; some demon may have controlled us. We could hardly think outside his teachings when we were with him, but when we are separated now, far enough away to see things in perspective, some of his teachings do sound foolish—"Turn the other cheek." "The last shall be first."

I could stand no more, so I stopped him before he could go further.

"Will you be there?" I demanded.

"Where?"

"At the crucifixion?"

"No, we couldn't possibly stand it," said Philip. "And we would be taking the risk of being caught and accused of helping to spread his teachings if we did. And what good would that do—except to suffer with him?"

"Besides," said Thomas, a little apologetically, "Simon, the Zealot, advises us to try to forget this whole experience. Jesus failed, and so have we. Let's go back to our fishing."

"So that is where you are going?"

"Yes, that is where we are going."

And they left—and a great loneliness engulfed me. When the crowd came pressing by, moving toward the hill of Golgotha, I went with them.

CHAPTER 31: A CROSS ON A HILL

THE VOICES of the people on the ground were muffled. All that could be heard from them were whispers, sighs and sobs. All merged in a sort of muted moan that swayed with the wind, and rose in a wistful penitence as of the whole earth toward the whole sky. Even the Roman soldiers speaking together and the clank of their armor and the click of their dice seemed unreal and far away.

But a voice from any of the three crosses came forth with a palpable clearness as from a sounding board. Not a word but was plainly audible. I noticed this first when the thief on the left railed against Caesar, and ended a moment later with fearful blasphemies.

Then suddenly the air which separated me from Jesus seemed to become almost an entity in itself, vital and friendly, bringing his voice, his very breathing to my waiting ear.

"*I thirst*," he said so gently that it was hardly more than a breath, yet as distinctly heard as if I had been where the Roman soldier stood who lifted a sponge toward him on a spear. So clear it came that it has been reverberating down the ages ever since. The strange, uncanny air! Can it hold in its folds voices like that to the end of Time?

It almost seemed that this friendly air was bringing even his thoughts to me, thoughts of compassion and love, yes, his very feelings, the bodily vibrations of acute pain and weariness, and the spiritual rhythm of peace and calm, and, above all, that marvelous, transcendent, heavenly forgiveness! I suddenly rose and walked straight toward the crosses. The soldiers were so absorbed in tossing dice that not a one offered to stop me.

I walked under one arm of Jesus' cross, and as I did a drop of blood from the pierced hand struck my garment on my left side, just above the heart. I stared at that little stain, so red, so vividly red. Then I looked up and held my open hands, first one and then the other, under the cross, and caught a glittering drop in each open palm.

Satisfied, I moved back to the place from whence I had come, and not too soon, for several soldiers were coming toward me. But there was something that neither they nor anyone else could take away. Three drops of Jesus' blood! When I resumed my place with the bystanders so far and yet so near the bleeding Christ I looked at my hands. The stain was gone—absorbed almost instantly through my eager pores—Jesus' blood, joined with mine, coursing through my veins.

Could it be a blood transfusion such as science has never told us about! Could I, can we, as the ages roll by, absorb that shed blood into our beings until his very heartbeats are ours?

"Mother, behold thy son." How tenderly he spoke!

I saw Mary weeping in the arms of John. Then Jesus looked down at him and smiled. "Son, behold thy mother." John alone of all the disciples had remained in this place of peril.

At last the words, *"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"*

John strode forward and placed his back against the cross, facing the throng, as a minister in a pulpit, and began where Jesus ended. The Roman captain in charge rose and started toward John as though to stop him. To my amazement John merely lifted his hand, as a speaker in an auditorium might call for silence. "I am reciting a psalm the one above me desires to hear before he dies. You won't deny him this, will you?"

The captain glanced toward Jesus whose eyes, gentle and loving, were fixed upon him. As though pierced by an arrow the man stood as one transfixed.

John went on with his recitation: it was a psalm that was not very familiar to me but one I remembered Jesus had been teaching his disciples the last few days.*¹ John had come to a passage that was strangely descriptive of the cynical faces of the Roman soldiers and the Pharisees who made up the major share of the bystanders. John's voice rose strong and clear, fixing his eyes on the Pharisees to his left.

"All who see me mock at me. They toss their heads and sneer, 'He left it to the Lord, let Him deliver him if the Lord cares for him.' "

And now John turned to the noisy crowd on his right and continued in a strong voice, "A brutal hoard besets me, fierce bulls of Bashan hem me in, panting for me open-mouthed, like lions roaring as they rend."

Then looking up at the crucified figure above him, he continued with a sob in his voice, "My strength is weak as water, my throat is dry, my tongue cleaves to my jaws, my hands and feet are pierced. I can count all my bones."

And looking at the Roman soldiers guarding all the ways of escape John continued, "A pack of curs encircle me, a gang of villains surround me, and my foes are gloating over me, dividing up my very clothes already, casting lots for my raiment."

¹ John is here reciting Psalm 22

The Roman captain turned to me and asked, "Is that in the Hebrew scriptures?"

"I think so," I replied.

Then looking toward the sky in a voice of appeal John cried, "O blessed Father, be not far from me; O Strength of mine, make haste to help me, pluck my unhappy soul from these wild oxen's horns."

And now John was taking in the entire assembly and a triumphant note was creeping into his voice. "Then shall I tell my fellows of Thy fame and praise Thee in our gathering. Praise the Lord, ye His worshipers, glorify Him all ye sons of Jacob, for He has not hidden His face from me, He is answering my appeal for help."

And now John was looking straight at me, and as I lifted up my eyes I beheld Jesus also looking at me.

"A seed shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the next generation. They shall come and shall declare His righteousness unto a people that shall be born, yes, born in the future, that He hath done it."

Jesus was still looking down at me—no, not at me alone but through me at all the unborn generations. His breath was coming hard but he smiled. John ceased speaking and came to the side of Mary. Jesus suddenly turned his eyes toward the sky and in a loud voice, strong and firm, spoke:

"Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit."

He closed his eyes and his head dropped limp upon his breast. The soldiers stopped casting dice. The mob ceased its scoffing. One of the Pharisees began to tremble violently. A deathlike silence fell upon all. The Roman captain in charge of the entire event, now plainly overcome with emotion, exclaimed, *"Certainly this was a righteous man!"*

CHAPTER 32: THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

FOR TWO DAYS I wandered the streets of Jerusalem stunned and stricken. If only I might find John or Peter or Nathanael, or any of the disciples, I knew they could help pull me out of the gloom which engulfed me. But I couldn't find a single disciple anywhere. They were truly scattered. And then it was I met Cleopas. Never was I more glad to see anyone.

"I was just about to run away from Jerusalem," I said, "to Bethany—or anywhere! I felt I couldn't stay another hour in this city of darkness and doom."

"I am on an errand to a little village about seven miles away," he said.
"Would you care to go with me?"

"You are an answer to prayer," I said.

The day was strangely dark and overcast. One had to peer closely at those who passed on the road to distinguish Jew from Samaritan and Arab from Jew. But we were paying little attention to people. I was pouring out my feelings about Jesus, describing the great loneliness that I always felt in his absence.

"How I long for him!" I sighed. "I would have him always with me if I could, every day of my life, as long as I live!" Somehow I felt I could be very frank with Cleopas.

A stranger, walking rapidly, had overtaken us and was passing on our right. He held his mantle close about his face, and paid no apparent heed to us.

"I also," said Cleopas, "have at times felt almost overwhelmed with a sense of loneliness without him. That is why I came up to Capernaum seeking him that day I first met you. Today I felt as leaden and dull as the sky above us," and he looked up at the heavy clouds that reached from horizon to horizon. "But there is a bright side to all this! (I could see Cleopas was trying his best to cheer me.) I was talking with Matthew yesterday. He says that Jesus was not someone for this age only, but for all Time. Therefore his death is as significant as his life. The prophecies in Isaiah of the suffering servant fit him perfectly. Matthew is a careful student of the prophets and he saw in every act of Jesus a fulfillment of prophecy. He says he came out of the past and joins us to the future. He was not of Time but of Eternity."

"What is this you are debating as you walk?" inquired the stranger, checking his pace to accommodate ours. We slowed almost to a stop, both plainly embarrassed by his question. We stared down at the ground, wondering how much to tell him.

Then Cleopas burst out, "Are you a lone stranger in Jerusalem, not to know what has been happening there?"

"And what is that?" asked the stranger, still holding the mantle close to his chin.

"All about Jesus of Nazareth!" exclaimed Cleopas as we resumed our journey. "To God and the people he was a prophet, strong in action and utterance, but the high priests and rulers

delivered him up to be sentenced to death and crucified him. Our own hope was that he would be the redeemer of Israel. But he is dead, and that is three days ago."

"O foolish men with hearts so slow to believe after all that the prophets have declared!" spoke the stranger. "Had not the Christ to suffer thus, and so enter into his glory?"

"What do you mean?" asked Cleopas.

"In order to reach men everywhere on the inner plane, do you not realize that he had to disappear from the outer plane?"

"I would gladly believe that if I knew how," said Cleopas. "I was just remarking to my friend here that Jesus seems to connect us up with all the past and all the future. He belongs not to Time but to all Eternity."

"You say truly," replied the other. "He especially joins together the inner dreams and yearnings of the people of the past and projects them with new hope of fulfillment to join the dream and cravings of the people of the future."

"Can you explain that further?" I asked.

"Beginning with Moses," he went on, "the people of Israel were always dreaming of a Savior. This dream found partial fulfillment in Moses, who delivered them from their captivity to the Egyptians into the comparative freedom of the Promised Land. But just as Moses couldn't go *into* the Promised Land, neither could his message carry his people *into* the *inner* promised land of the *inner soul*."

"I do not understand," Cleopas broke in, "Moses gave them the Ten Commandments and hundreds of other rules to govern the religious life of the people, did he not?"

"Yes, many rules, and to those rules the scribes and Pharisees added a thousand more. But the world will not be saved by rules and laws alone. After Moses came the prophets, who talked not of rules but of dreams and visions. Moses brought into manifestation the things he aspired to do, while the prophets aimed higher but could not in their time see the fulfillment of their dreams. What the prophets did was to plant seeds. The great things that God plans for his people have first to be dreams in the hearts of man; these dreams must grow and flourish for hundreds of years before the season of harvest arrives. The vision of Jesus must wait for hundreds of years before its full harvest will truly appear."

"Hundreds of years!" whispered Cleopas aghast.

"Yes, my friend. The Sons of Israel were slaves to the sons of Pharaoh for over four hundred years before Moses appeared. Cannot we wait a few centuries for a greater dream to be realized?

"God's dreams," he continued, "do not come true until they are shared for awhile in the hearts of men, just as a child is not born until the yearning that lies in the heart of a man is shared for a while in the body of a woman.

"So God's dream for the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt had to reside for more than four hundred years in the hearts of the oppressed sons of Israel before the fulfillment in the form of Moses appeared. Little did the people realize that because of their persistence in holding fast to this dream the mother of Moses was moved to hide her baby in the bulrushes near the palace. Little did they realize that the very force of their dream led the footsteps of the daughter of Pharaoh to the spot where the infant lay. Little did they realize that the warmth in their dreams stirred a warmth in the heart of the princess to take the child and train him under the wise men of Egypt. Then Moses sojourned in the wilderness and his experience at the burning bush was ordained of God and shaped and molded and matured by the dreams hidden deep in the hearts of the people of Israel.

"Then after Moses stepped out of this world, the prophets planted in the hearts of Israel another dream—the dream of a Redeemer who was to come someday and save Israel and the entire world from the suffering and the sin in which it is so deeply involved. Job cried out, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.' Isaiah proclaimed 'And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' Motherhood became sacred in the eyes of all the Hebrews because every woman dreamed of someday becoming the mother of the announced One. Every prophet scanned the horizon to see him approaching.

"And because the Father in heaven dreamed that dream, and because it was pictured in the hearts of the people as the figure of a mountain is reflected on the surface of a lake, and because that reflection persisted for thousands of years, the fulfillment had to come.

Jesus, the fulfillment of the dream of the Old Covenant, himself dreamed another dream of a New Covenant. After a few thousand years his dream will also come true."

"And what is that dream?" I asked.

"The dream of the Kingdom of heaven coming into being within the hearts of men."

"And when that dream is accomplished," I urged, "and there are enough people with the Kingdom of love and peace in their hearts and lives, should not, they, also, get together and dream of the very heaven itself coming down to earth, spreading perfection and harmony everywhere?"

"Verily, they should," he answered.

"And what should we do now?" asked Cleopas.

"What should you do? Why, simply continue to dream the dream of Jesus. Step right into the body of that dream of a Kingdom of heaven on earth. Dream of it first as an inner experience of peace and love and harmony in your own heart, holding you in perfect adjustment and in perfect harmony with all people with whom you deal. Next, dream of its coming into manifestation in groups; and then in nations as they adjust themselves to all the groups within themselves, and to all the nations around them."

"Will that actually help to bring the Kingdom of heaven into the affairs of earth?" I said.

"Will that actually! Oh ye of little faith! If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed in the power of a dream in the hearts of people—a dream that has taken its rise in the Heart of God! If you had that faith there is no power on sea or land, in heaven or on earth, that could prevent the dream from coming into realization exactly as God planned it."

And so our conversation continued until we reached the little town of Emmaus. The stranger would have gone farther, but it was growing late and we constrained him to stop at the village inn at least long enough to dine with us. His conversation on the road had done more to bring healing to our souls than anything that had happened since the crucifixion.

As we placed ourselves around the table all set with food, the stranger took up the bread and blessed it and broke it and handed it to us. A servant, just then came into the dimly lit room with a bright candle. The light fell full on the face of—Jesus of Nazareth!

"My Lord and Saviour!" I cried.

And at that instant he vanished out of our sight. Cleopas turned to me, gasping in amazement. "Did not our hearts burn within us when he was talking to us in the road, opening up the scriptures to us?"

We finished the meal, but only because he had blessed it.

"Oh, that I could hear him again!" I breathed.

"Let us carry the news to the disciples at once," said Cleopas.

CHAPTER 33: CHRIST LIVES

WHAT FOLLOWS is almost too holy to be put into any book. We found the disciples in the same upper room where they had shared the last supper together—a completely revived, revitalized group of men. It was thrilling to see the new joy and radiance in their faces, especially in the face of Peter.

"He lives! We have seen him!" he almost shouted as Cleopas and I entered the room. We told them of our experience and then in our joy we all seemed to be talking at once. Suddenly we fell silent at the same moment. For in the vacant place at the center of the table stood Jesus.

I was so overcome by the glow of his presence that I can recall little of what he first said. All I remember is his "Peace be unto you," and then something about all the promises in the prophets and the psalms being fulfilled. As he had achieved victory over death, he said, they were to proclaim, beginning right at Jerusalem, that through repentance and forgiveness everyone could achieve victory over sin.

"And remember that I will send the promise of my Father. But stay in the city until you are endowed with power from on high."

One of the disciples was now kneeling at his feet, his head upraised and arms spread wide, saying in a loud voice, "My Lord and my God." Jesus smiled down upon him and said, "Thomas, because you have seen me you believe; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

Then almost as in a trance we all retraced the steps that the disciples had taken out of the city and up the hill of the Garden of Gethsemane, but now in joy and not in gloom, for now he was with us. When we reached the crest of the hill we saw Jesus rise above the others and ascend slowly into the heavens. Far as he was away from us, I could see his love-filled eyes looking down upon us.

No longer would he walk with us up the road that led from Nazareth to Jerusalem. No longer could I sit and hear his voice as he spoke to us from the boat or from the mountain top. A

great yearning came to call him back, but he was gone.

I turned again to the vast spaces of Eternity—the Power that had brought me here. "Take me to Jesus!" I cried. "Oh, take me to Jesus!"

And then, while standing with eyes uplifted, once more I was picked up and carried through Time and Eternity on an odyssey of the soul impossible to describe. For it was not Space that flitted past me as I felt myself rising into the air, but men and flowers and living things; yet this time, all, all were growing with the speed of light, passing from bloom to ripened fruit, the fruit in turn bearing more seeds, which again bore fruit, the seeds ever springing into new fulfillment, until the vastness and the increase could not be measured.

Suddenly I was aware that I was back in the modern world from which I had come. The clock was purring on the mantle shelf, its hands pointing to almost the same hour when I was looking at them last. Had this return to Jesus been reality or merely a dream? It mattered not to me whether my journey were dream or actuality, whether I sat here in modern America or walked the roads of ancient Palestine. Only one thing mattered now, and that could never be taken from me.

Jesus is real! And nothing henceforward can take him from me. For now that Jesus had stepped out of the world in the body, it seemed that his presence was here more apparently than ever before. He had vanished from earthly sight but he would never again vanish from our heavenly gaze. Only to lift our eyes high enough, only to yearn in our heart toward him greatly enough, and he would be in our midst. And as I became aware of it and got quiet in the contemplation of it, that presence became more penetrating until it was overwhelming in its power. Everyone I had met in

Palestine became so lovely and so dear that I wondered how such a heaven could exist on earth. Even their mistakes became precious and valuable. The denial by Peter in the courtyard and the wistful yearning that followed it became as beautiful as a pearl set in a ring of gold. Even Judas' betrayal and the agonizing remorse that drove him to a rope on a lonely tree took on the aspects of a mother's bringing her child to birth. The agony of Mother Mary at the foot of the cross as her son was projected into heaven was more magnificent than her agony in the manger that projected him as a babe into this world. It was precious for a child to be born in a manger; it was more precious for a God to be born on a cross.

And as my thoughts went ahead to my own world, everyone I had ever met or ever would

meet became so lovely and so unbelievably dear that I could hardly await the time that I should rejoin them and share with them the experience that I had had.

And the joy that came upon me, that almost overwhelmed me with its intensity, was the absolute knowledge that I *could* share the experience, yes, *all* of it, if they would only understand how simply it could be done.

For we would need only to get still together, then get a little more still. Then when our bodies had dropped their tensions, when our minds had gotten so quiet that all thought of fear, doubt, jealousy or anger had completely disappeared, and all silly intruding cares of worldly things had slipped from us like ballast, then in that inner silence amid those great quiet spaces there would emerge the Presence of Christ.

Then I knew, and no one or no event could ever take the knowledge from me, that when two or three come together and love each other and trust each other and get silent with each other, Christ will be in their midst. When two minds agree, they invoke the Master Mind of Christ just as truly as a man and a woman produce a child.

Henceforth I knew, and no one could ever take it from me, that all I need do was to ask for that Presence, and Christ would be walking by my side, sitting with me in my study, counseling me, guiding me, protecting me, loving me.

Greater than that, even great as that was, was the consciousness that Jesus Christ henceforth abode in me and I in him. I could not escape him if I would, and I would not if I could. Henceforth, whenever I claimed this blessed privilege, he would think through me, talk through me, love through me, bless through me. Yes, he is writing these very words that are being put into this book. It is he looking through me, right now, seeing every man, woman and child in all the world as infinitely precious, ecstatically beautiful, each one so valuable to himself, his family and the world, that nothing but the highest love I am capable of is worthy for me to send to them and to him.

I cannot be content again to live one moment less than my utmost for his very highest.

To experience the power of Jesus Christ even for one moment is to experience him forever. One can never be the same again. All pettiness, triviality and self-importance fall like drops of water from the shaking aspen leaves. Nothing henceforth is without meaning to one who has seen the Christ, for everything henceforth is bathed through and through with the Love of God,

partaking of the eternal values of heaven itself.

The touch of Christ had for me, and hence could do the same for all, changed ashes to roses, restored all the wasted years that the locust had eaten, transformed this world of war and hate into a heaven of love and all because Christ had been here in the body, and all because he is here in Spirit, and all because we who follow him and grow quiet with him can have him ever with us,
now and forevermore.

Yes, I have permanently returned to Jesus. That is the one real thing I derived from this precious journey and what I hope you who shared this journey will continue to share with me. It is the one thing I am sure of and will remain sure of through all Eternity. For neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth nor any other creature can separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And every one who has truly returned to Jesus can verify what I say. Henceforth I shall go up and down the roads of America, yes, of the entire world, proclaiming the good tidings that Jesus is a living Christ, and today in this twentieth century he is the most real figure in all the world. And so I say to you who have followed me on this pilgrimage, let us put our commands upon Space and Time that they may make easy the way for us as we all answer the ringing call of Jesus, ***“Come, follow me.”***

